

Marxist Analysis of USA

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PART I. METHOD AND THEORY

Dialectical Materialism and the Analysis of Society

Marx, Engels and Lenin established a scientific thought of society that begins not from ideas, nor from what people believe about themselves, but from the material conditions under which they live and work. Their method is dialectical and materialist. It sees human history as the development of material production, of the relation between those who work and those who own, of the contradiction between productive forces and the relations of production.

Marx's method uncovers what lies beneath the surface of appearances. The bourgeois economists look at the surface — prices, markets, supply and demand — and think that is reality. Marx looked behind it, to the real movement: the production of value by labour and its appropriation by capital. He revealed that profit is nothing other than unpaid labour, that the accumulation of capital is the accumulation of this unpaid work.

In capitalism, everything appears reversed. The worker seems to be paid for his work, while in truth he is paid only for a part of it, the rest becoming surplus value for the capitalist. Commodities seem to have a life of their own, as if value were a property of the object, not of human labour. This is what Marx called commodity fetishism — the world of things hiding the social relation between workers and owners.

The same method must be used to understand today's United States. Its power, wealth, and apparent freedom conceal relations of exploitation more advanced and more perfected than any that existed in Marx's time. The skyscrapers of finance, the digital networks, and the industrial farms are not independent creations of "innovation" or "entrepreneurship", but the result of social labour organized under capitalist command. The worker produces everything, but control and ownership belong to a small class that owns the means of production.

To analyse modern America is therefore to follow the path Marx used in his analysis of England in *Capital*. England was then the most developed capitalist nation, the laboratory in which the future of all capitalism could be seen. The United States today plays the same role. It is the purest expression of mature capitalism — monopoly, finance, imperialism, and the domination of the entire world market.

Dialectical materialism teaches that no social system stands still. Capitalism develops contradictions that it cannot escape. The more it expands, the more it concentrates wealth in few hands, the more it drives millions into debt, insecurity, and wage slavery. The contradiction between social production and private appropriation becomes sharper. Marx showed that such contradictions are not errors but laws of the system itself.

Lenin, developing Marx's thought, applied this method to the age of monopoly and imperialism. He showed that when competition gives way to monopoly, when industry and

banking fuse into finance capital, capitalism enters its highest and final stage. The same dialectical movement that once freed humanity from feudal bondage now produces new chains — the domination of finance, the rule of billionaires, the subjugation of whole nations.

To understand the United States, one must use this same dialectical approach:

- to see behind its democratic phrases the class power of capital;
- to see behind its consumption the exploitation that sustains it;
- to see behind its individual freedom the collective dependence of the worker upon capital;
- and to see in its prosperity the seeds of its own crisis.

Dialectical materialism does not describe the world as static but as a process of becoming. It studies motion through contradiction — the struggle of opposites that drives society forward. In the case of the United States, the contradiction between immense productive forces and narrow capitalist relations has reached its extreme. The means to free humanity from toil exist, but they are held hostage by profit.

Thus, to analyse the United States scientifically is to reveal how its economic base shapes its politics, its ideology, its media, and its everyday life. Just as Marx revealed the “laws of motion” of capitalism in general, we reveal those of the American system in particular. The method is the same: start from the material base, follow the contradictions, and expose the class relations that lie behind every appearance of freedom, equality, and democracy.

Engels completed and expanded Marx’s materialist thought by showing how every sphere of social life — law, philosophy, art, religion, and political ideas — arises from and reflects the economic base. In his work *The Condition of the Working Class in England*, he did not speak of ideas in the abstract. He looked at how the factory system, the daily misery of workers, and the brutal competition for profit created the very spirit of English society. Thought, for Engels, is not independent from life. It grows out of the real conditions of existence, from the way humans produce and reproduce their life.

This does not mean that ideas are useless or that they have no effect. Engels explained that once born, ideas and institutions become forces of their own, acting back upon the economic base. But their origin and ultimate determination lie in material conditions. The economic structure of society sets the limits and direction for all other forms of thought.

In this way, Engels uncovered the unity between the development of the productive forces and the development of human consciousness. When new forces of production arise, when the tools, machines, and forms of cooperation outgrow the old relations of property, new ideas begin to emerge that challenge the existing order. The struggle between old and new ideas mirrors the struggle between old and new classes.

Engels’ method allows us to understand the entire structure of modern capitalist ideology, especially in the United States. The dominant ideas of a given age are always the ideas of its

ruling class. In a country where a handful of monopolists and financiers own nearly all the means of production, communication, and culture, the ruling thought can only be the thought of those who own. The so-called “American values” — individualism, competition, private property, and the cult of success — are not universal truths, but reflections of a social system based on private appropriation of socially produced wealth.

This explains why in American social thought, work is glorified while the worker is degraded. The culture praises “hard work,” but it hides who controls the results of that work. It preaches “freedom,” yet chains millions through debt and wage dependence. Engels’ thought exposes this inversion: when the economic base is one of exploitation, even the noblest ideas become distorted. Freedom becomes the freedom of the capitalist to exploit. Equality becomes equality in the marketplace — an equality between those who must sell labour and those who buy it.

Engels also showed how every class creates its own form of consciousness. The bourgeois class sees the world as a collection of individuals competing for advantage; it cannot imagine any other relation. The working class, through its collective life in production, develops a different consciousness — one based on cooperation, solidarity, and the recognition that the wealth of society is the result of common labour. Thus, the development of the workers’ movement is not only an economic process but also an awakening of social thought — the birth of a new understanding of society and history.

In the United States today, this contradiction between capitalist ideology and the real life of workers is more visible than ever. The ruling class commands the universities, the media, and the culture industry, shaping the very ways people perceive reality. Yet beneath this domination, a different consciousness grows — among those who experience unemployment, debt, unaffordable housing, and the constant insecurity of capitalist life. These experiences compel the working class to think beyond the limits of bourgeois ideology, just as Engels foresaw in his writings on class and thought.

To apply Engels’ exposition to the modern United States is to trace how its entire system of values, beliefs, and institutions arises from its capitalist foundation. The worship of profit gives rise to its moral code; the division of classes shapes its political system; its culture of individual success mirrors the competition of the market. When the economic structure begins to decay, when monopolies strangle free enterprise and finance capital dominates production, the ideological structure also enters crisis. The contradictions of the economy appear as contradictions of thought — confusion, cynicism, and the loss of faith in the system’s ideals.

Thus, Engels’ insight that “being determines consciousness” remains the key to understanding American society. The thought of the United States cannot be explained by its Constitution, its traditions, or its philosophers, but by the real life of its people — the production and distribution of wealth under monopoly capitalism. From this base arises the entire superstructure of ideas that sanctify exploitation. To change that consciousness, the base itself must be transformed.

Lenin advanced Marx and Engels' materialist thought into the epoch of imperialism, when capitalism had reached its highest and most decayed form. He did not alter the foundation of Marxism; he developed it further, applying it to a world where the concentration of capital had reached such proportions that competition itself was transformed into monopoly, and industry and banking had fused into a single power — finance capital.

Marx had shown that the accumulation of capital leads inevitably to concentration: the strong absorb the weak, small enterprises perish, and the means of production become controlled by ever fewer hands. Lenin demonstrated that by the beginning of the twentieth century this process had completed a new stage. The capitalist class had divided into a small number of monopolist groups whose control extended over whole industries, whole nations, and even continents. The old free-market capitalism had turned into monopoly capitalism.

Finance capital, as Lenin described, is the unification of industrial and banking capital under the command of the monopolies. The banks no longer serve as mere intermediaries of credit; they become owners of shares, directors of industry, and controllers of state policy. Capital is centralized not only in the hands of individuals but in vast financial corporations whose influence governs all spheres of life. This fusion of bank and industry creates the economic foundation of imperialism — the drive to export capital, dominate markets, and divide the world among the great powers.

In his *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin revealed the essential laws of this new phase:

1. The concentration of production and capital has developed to such a degree that it has created monopolies which play a decisive role in economic life.
2. The merging of bank capital with industrial capital creates the financial oligarchy.
3. The export of capital, as distinguished from the export of commodities, acquires exceptional importance.
4. The formation of international monopolist associations of capitalists divides the world among them.
5. The territorial division of the world among the great powers is completed.

These laws explain the structure of modern United States capitalism more precisely than any bourgeois theory. The American economy is the embodiment of monopoly capitalism in its highest development. A few hundred corporations, supported by the banking system and the state, control the entire life of the nation. Production, finance, communication, and even political decisions are concentrated in their hands. The Federal Reserve, the great financial houses, and the technological monopolies are not neutral institutions; they are the machinery of the financial oligarchy that rules over society.

Lenin showed that in this stage, capitalism becomes parasitic and decaying. Instead of developing the productive forces of the world, it subordinates them to speculation, debt, and

war. The monopolists accumulate immense profits not by productive work, but by controlling markets, manipulating credit, and exploiting the working people of both the imperialist centers and the dependent nations. This parasitism is visible in modern America, where the economy rests on financial speculation and the export of capital rather than real production. The enormous public and private debt is a symptom of this decay — the illusion of wealth sustained by the plunder of the future.

Lenin also revealed that imperialism transforms the role of the state. The state ceases to act as the representative of the general interests of the bourgeoisie; it becomes the direct instrument of the monopolies. In the United States, the union of corporate and state power is open and complete. The state defends monopoly interests at home and abroad, maintaining military bases, waging wars for markets and resources, and ensuring the global dominance of its financial system. What appears as “national security” or “defense of democracy” is, in essence, the defense of monopoly capital.

Through Lenin’s adaptation, we understand that the contradictions of capitalism now appear on a world scale. The export of capital creates a hierarchy of nations, some exploiting and others exploited. The American worker, while oppressed within his own country, is made to share in the spoils of imperialism through higher prices, credit, and consumer illusions — the ideological bribe that maintains the stability of the system. But as crises deepen, even this bribe fails, and the contradictions return with renewed force.

Lenin’s dialectical analysis shows that monopoly capitalism is not a new, stable form of society but the dying stage of the old. It combines tremendous power with increasing instability. The very scale of concentration that gives the monopolies strength also makes their collapse catastrophic. The centralization of wealth, the domination of finance, and the militarization of the economy prepare the conditions for revolutionary change.

To study the United States today through Lenin’s method is to see a system that has fulfilled all the features of imperialism: monopoly control, finance domination, export of capital, division of the world, and a parasitic oligarchy living upon the labour of others. Its wealth depends on exploitation not only of its own workers but of the entire world. Its ideology of “freedom” masks dependence on the credit system; its democracy conceals the rule of capital; its global dominance is sustained by military force.

Lenin’s adaptation of Marxism thus gives us the key to interpret the modern world. The United States is not an exception but the final manifestation of capitalism’s general laws. What began in Marx’s England ends here in imperialist America — the system reaching its highest point and at the same time approaching its inevitable decline.

The USA as the Maturest Form of Capitalism

The United States presents itself to the world as an exception — a land of freedom, democracy, and unlimited opportunity. Its ruling class has built an entire mythology around this idea of American exceptionalism, claiming that its institutions, its wealth, and its social

order are unique, born of some special genius of liberty or national character. But from the standpoint of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, there is no exception in history. Every society develops according to material laws. The United States is not a miracle; it is the most complete and mature form of capitalist development.

The conditions that made America's rise possible were those that Marx described as the natural result of the capitalist mode of production. A vast territory, immense natural resources, and the early triumph of private property created an ideal ground for the rapid accumulation of capital. The extermination of indigenous peoples and the enslavement of Africans provided the primitive accumulation upon which American industry was built. In this sense, the United States is the concentrated image of capitalism's birth and growth: expansion through conquest, wealth through exploitation, and progress through the subjugation of labour.

In Europe, capitalism had to fight its way out of feudal bonds. In America, it began already free of feudalism, and thus it could expand with a speed and intensity unseen in the Old World. Engels foresaw this when he observed that the United States represented the "purest" capitalist development. Every relation was reduced to one between buyer and seller; every human activity was subordinated to the pursuit of profit. The country's political structure, built on a constitution protecting private property above all else, became the most perfect legal form of bourgeois rule.

Lenin would later recognize in the United States the fully developed features of monopoly and finance capital. Here, the merger of banks, corporations, and the state reached its most advanced form. The domination of the financial oligarchy — a few hundred billionaires directing the entire life of the nation — is not an accident but the logical outcome of capitalist concentration. The gigantic trusts, technological monopolies, and military-industrial complex embody the transition from competitive to monopolistic capitalism that Lenin described.

What in earlier epochs appeared as the "freedom of enterprise" has in America become freedom only for capital itself. Small producers, independent farmers, and even minor industrialists are crushed or absorbed by the monopolies. The dream of the individual entrepreneur — once the symbol of American capitalism — has become a myth sustained by advertising and ideology. The worker, meanwhile, is chained to debt, his life subordinated to the rhythm of financial markets and corporate control.

Thus, America represents the summit of capitalist evolution: the complete domination of the economy by monopolies, the fusion of state and finance, the transformation of politics into the management of capital's interests, and the reduction of the worker to a commodified existence. Its vast productive forces, its technological achievements, and its global networks of trade are not expressions of human progress in themselves; they are the means by which capital maintains and expands its power.

At the same time, this very perfection of the capitalist organism reveals its decay. Marx wrote that every social system creates the conditions for its own destruction. In the United States, the contradiction between the immense social nature of production and the private

appropriation of its results has reached its highest tension. Millions produce collectively — in factories, offices, logistics, and digital networks — yet the fruits of their labour are seized by a tiny minority. This contradiction, invisible in the early stages of capitalism, now dominates all life.

American capitalism also exposes the global dimension of exploitation. The prosperity of the United States depends on the subjugation of other nations, the export of capital, and the military enforcement of markets. Its internal order cannot be separated from its external imperialism. The working class at home is linked to the oppression of workers abroad, just as the wealth of the metropole depends on the poverty of the periphery. Lenin showed that in this stage, the world becomes an economic organism dominated by a handful of imperialist powers — and the United States stands at its head.

The ideology of exceptionalism serves to mask this reality. It tells the worker that his suffering is his own fault, that he is free, that he can escape exploitation by joining the exploiters. It tells the world that American power is benevolent, that its wars bring “freedom” and “democracy.” But beneath this ideology lies the same material law that Marx uncovered: the drive for profit, the compulsion to accumulate, the endless expansion of capital. The difference is only one of scale and perfection.

In this sense, the United States is not the negation of capitalism’s crises but their concentration. Its immense wealth coexists with mass poverty; its technology coexists with insecurity; its democracy coexists with the dictatorship of capital. Every contradiction that Marx and Lenin described — between capital and labour, between production and consumption, between imperialist center and dependent periphery — finds its fullest expression here.

Therefore, to study the United States is to study the final and most complete phase of the capitalist organism. It shows not a new system but the exhaustion of the old one. Its achievements demonstrate the power of social production; its crises demonstrate the impossibility of continuing private appropriation. As Lenin wrote, imperialism is the highest and final stage of capitalism — not because it strengthens the system, but because it marks the beginning of its end.

The United States stands as both the summit and the limit of capitalist development. It reveals the full potential of human productive power and, at the same time, the chains that prevent this power from serving humanity. To understand it through Marx, Engels, and Lenin is to see not the triumph of capitalism, but its approaching collapse — the point where the forces of production, having outgrown private ownership, prepare the ground for a new social order.

PART II. POLITICAL ECONOMY OF THE UNITED STATES

The Debt System as Modern Servitude

In the United States, the development of capitalism has reached a stage where the chains of exploitation are no longer made of iron, but of credit. The worker is no longer tied to a factory by a physical master, as under feudalism, but to the banks and corporations by a network of loans, interest rates, and monthly payments. This is the new form of servitude — economic dependence disguised as personal choice.

Marx explained that under capitalism, the worker is free in a double sense: free to sell his labour, and free of all property that would allow him to live without selling it. In the United States, this “freedom” has taken its most advanced and deceptive form. The worker appears to live in abundance: he has a home, a car, electronic goods, and access to education. Yet almost every possession is mortgaged. The home belongs to the bank until the last payment; the car to the creditor; the education to the loan office; even health and survival depend on credit cards and insurance companies.

Debt has become the invisible chain linking every worker to the capitalist system. In feudal society, the serf owed labour to the lord; in the United States, the worker owes interest to the bank. The result is the same: a life ruled by necessity and fear. Every month, millions labour not to live freely, but to keep up with payments that will never end.

The statistics reveal the depth of this bondage. Nearly ninety percent of adults in the United States carry some form of debt — mortgage, student loan, car loan, or credit card. Total household debt exceeds twenty trillion dollars, surpassing the entire annual output of the nation. Student debt alone chains more than forty million people, many for life, while medical debt drives hundreds of thousands into bankruptcy each year.

This system of permanent indebtedness is not an accident but an organic product of capitalism’s development in its imperialist stage. Lenin showed that when the accumulation of capital reaches saturation within national boundaries, finance capital seeks new fields of profit. In the modern United States, that field is the daily life of the worker himself. His need for shelter, education, and health has become a new terrain for profit extraction.

Banks and financial institutions do not merely mediate exchange; they dominate the entire social structure. The interest paid by workers forms a continuous stream of surplus value transferred to the financial oligarchy. The wage, already divided by the capitalist who buys labour power, is divided again by the creditor who claims future income through loans. Thus, the worker is exploited twice — first at the point of production, then through the mechanism of debt.

Credit, which Marx called a lever of capitalist production, once served to accelerate circulation and investment. In the United States, it has become the foundation of consumption

and the substitute for real wages. For decades, while productivity rose, the worker's pay stagnated. To maintain consumption and conceal the class contradiction, the bourgeoisie expanded credit. The worker could buy what his wage no longer covered, and the illusion of prosperity was maintained through borrowing. Debt became the means by which the system postponed its crisis — at the cost of making that crisis deeper.

This modern servitude produces a new psychological and social condition. The worker is disciplined not only by the threat of unemployment but by the fear of losing everything — house, education, medical care. Debt penetrates every aspect of life; it shapes consciousness. It turns the worker into an obedient subject who measures his worth by his credit score, not by his humanity. The banks do not need overseers or chains; the debtor polices himself.

Engels, observing the early bourgeois society of the nineteenth century, saw how material dependence gives rise to ideological submission. The American debt system perfects this mechanism. The debtor believes he is responsible for his own poverty, that failure to pay is a moral fault, not a social condition. Thus, the system reproduces itself through shame and isolation, preventing collective awareness of exploitation.

At the same time, this vast edifice of debt is unstable. It depends on the continual expansion of credit and the illusion that loans will be repaid. When crisis strikes, as Marx described in the cycle of capitalist production, the contradictions explode. The housing collapse of 2008, the student debt crisis, and the waves of bankruptcies show how easily the pyramid of finance collapses under its own weight. Each crisis transfers more wealth from the many to the few, concentrating ownership and deepening the dependence of the masses.

The debt system therefore is not an auxiliary feature of American capitalism but its central mechanism. It transforms the promise of freedom into the reality of subjugation. The worker, formally free, is in fact bound for life to the creditor. The state, far from protecting him, enforces this bondage through law, taxation, and the monetary policy of the Federal Reserve. The endless creation of money, far from easing the worker's burden, fuels inflation and further enriches the financial oligarchy.

Through Marx's and Lenin's thought, we see that debt in the United States is not merely a financial relation; it is a social relation of class domination. It extends the power of capital beyond the workplace into every corner of existence. It turns the worker's future labour into a commodity sold in advance to the bank. It makes the very time of life — years of work yet to come — an object of exploitation.

In this way, the debt system represents the perfected form of capitalist servitude. The bourgeoisie no longer needs to command labour directly; it commands it through credit, through the promise and threat of future payment. This is the mature form of wage slavery, wrapped in the language of freedom. And as in every previous stage of class society, this new form of bondage carries within it the seeds of revolt. The worker, discovering that his freedom is an illusion, will turn against the system that enslaves him through debt, and from this awakening, the struggle for true liberation will arise.

Marx revealed that in the capitalist system, surplus value is the essence of exploitation — the portion of labour performed by the worker that is unpaid, appropriated by the capitalist as profit. In Lenin's time, when finance capital came to dominate production, this exploitation took on new and more concealed forms. The worker was not only robbed at the point of production, but throughout his life, through the power of money and interest. In the United States today, this process has reached a perfection Marx and Lenin could only anticipate: the transformation of finance itself into the master of society, and interest into the most pervasive instrument of class rule.

Under earlier capitalism, the industrial capitalist was the main appropriator of surplus labour. Under imperialist capitalism, the banker and financier become supreme. The bank no longer serves the industrialist; it commands him. Credit, which once expanded production, now governs it. Through stocks, bonds, and loans, the entire working class becomes a source of interest-bearing capital. Every wage is already divided, and the largest portion of it flows upward as interest on mortgages, car loans, student debt, credit cards, and taxes that service the public debt.

This mechanism converts the working class into a permanent tributary of finance capital. The worker labours not only for the employer but for the bank that owns the employer, for the insurer that owns his health, and for the creditor that owns his house. The entire system functions as a continuous extraction of surplus from labour through the instrument of debt.

Marx called interest-bearing capital the “most fetish-like form” of capital, because it seems to produce profit by itself, without labour. In modern America, this illusion has become the foundation of society. Money appears to generate more money, as if independent of production, while the real source of value — human labour — is hidden beneath layers of financial abstraction. The stock market, hedge funds, and speculative instruments all rest on the same reality: the appropriation of future labour through the control of credit.

Lenin explained that in the imperialist epoch, this domination of finance capital transforms the entire economy. Capital ceases to circulate freely; it accumulates in monopolies and financial institutions that control both industry and the state. The banks, through their command of credit, determine which enterprises live and which die. The state, indebted to these same interests, acts as their enforcer. The central bank becomes the heart of the system, regulating money supply not for the needs of the people but for the security of capital.

In the United States, the Federal Reserve stands as the supreme organ of finance capital. It does not represent the nation, but the alliance of private banks and corporations. Through its control of interest rates and money creation, it determines the rhythm of the economy, the level of employment, and the cost of living. Inflation and deflation are not natural events but instruments through which the bourgeoisie redistributes wealth. When the Federal Reserve raises rates, it protects the creditor; when it lowers them, it inflates asset prices, enriching those who already own. In both cases, the worker loses.

Interest, in its modern form, is thus the purest expression of capitalist domination. It binds the worker to his master not through visible coercion but through necessity. To live, he must

borrow; to borrow, he must work; and to work, he must accept the conditions imposed by capital. The promise of individual success, the illusion of ownership through mortgages and credit, masks a social reality identical to slavery: the labour of the many sustaining the comfort of the few.

Engels once wrote that the modern wage worker is freer than the slave only in appearance, because he may change his master but not escape the system. In the age of finance capital, even that limited freedom disappears. The worker cannot escape his creditor; the debt follows him from job to job, from generation to generation. Children inherit not wealth but obligation. Families labour for decades to pay the interest that has already enriched the bank many times over.

This system of interest-bearing domination produces not only economic servitude but also ideological subjugation. The worker believes himself to be a “consumer,” a “homeowner,” an “investor,” even as he is consumed by interest. He takes pride in his credit, not understanding that it is a measure of his usefulness to capital. This is the psychological dimension of finance slavery — the transformation of subordination into self-discipline.

Yet, as Marx and Lenin taught, every form of domination contains within it the contradiction that will destroy it. The more finance capital concentrates wealth and power, the more it exposes the parasitic nature of the ruling class. The worker begins to see that his debt is not a personal failure but a social condition, that the interest he pays feeds the same oligarchy that exploits him at work. Awareness grows that true freedom is not the ability to borrow, but the abolition of the system that makes borrowing necessary.

The chains of modern wage slavery are forged by interest and finance, but they are not eternal. They can be broken only when the workers seize the means of credit, banking, and production, transforming them into social instruments serving human need. As Marx foresaw, the expropriators will be expropriated, and the immense machinery of finance will cease to be an engine of servitude and become an organ of collective distribution.

In this transformation lies the liberation not only of the American worker but of all humanity, for the system of interest-bearing domination that now rules the United States rules the world. To destroy it is to begin the construction of a new social order, founded not on the bondage of debt, but on the conscious organization of labour for the common good.

Inflation, the Central Bank, and the Extraction of Surplus Value

Marx showed that money, under capitalism, is not a neutral tool of exchange but the universal form of value — the embodiment of social labour transformed into an object that commands other objects. In capitalist society, whoever controls money controls labour, production, and life itself. In the United States, this control is concentrated in the institution of the Federal Reserve, which functions not as a servant of the people but as the central organ of the financial oligarchy. It is the heart of the imperialist system, regulating the circulation of capital and directing the extraction of surplus value on a national and global scale.

The Federal Reserve presents itself as an independent authority, standing above politics, its purpose being to ensure “stability.” But stability in a capitalist system means only the stability of profits, the preservation of the property relations that keep the workers dependent. Every decision it makes — on interest rates, on the supply of money, on the buying and selling of government debt — is guided by the needs of finance capital. It is, as Lenin would have recognized, the perfect example of how the bourgeois state becomes the executive committee of the ruling class.

Money creation in this system is the modern form of primitive accumulation. When the Federal Reserve expands credit, it increases the money supply without increasing real production. The first recipients of this new money are the banks, corporations, and wealthy investors — those closest to the source. They use it to buy assets, driving up the prices of property, stocks, and commodities. By the time this money circulates to the working class as wages, prices have already risen. Thus, inflation acts as a concealed tax upon labour, transferring value from those who produce to those who own.

Marx described this process in its embryonic form in *Capital*, when he wrote that the depreciation of money is one of the means by which the bourgeoisie cheats the working class. Lenin, analysing the monetary policies during the First World War, observed that inflation is the “most convenient and subtle form of robbery.” It allows the state to enrich the capitalist class and pay for wars and crises at the expense of the workers, without openly raising taxes. The United States has perfected this method: printing money to sustain endless wars, speculative bubbles, and corporate bailouts, while telling the people that inflation is the fault of “supply chains” or “overconsumption.”

Through inflation, the ruling class continuously devalues the purchasing power of wages. The worker’s nominal income may rise, but the real value of his labour declines. Prices of necessities — food, housing, energy — increase faster than wages, forcing the worker to borrow more, deepening the cycle of debt. Meanwhile, the assets of the wealthy appreciate with every round of monetary expansion. The central bank thus performs its true function: the organized management of class exploitation through monetary policy.

The Federal Reserve’s so-called “interest rate decisions” are, in reality, acts of class warfare. When inflation begins to threaten the profits of capital, the bank raises rates, creating unemployment and suppressing wages. The “fight against inflation” becomes a fight against the working class. When the capitalist economy falters, the bank lowers rates, inflating asset prices and restoring the wealth of the bourgeoisie. Every policy serves to stabilize the system of exploitation, never to relieve the burden on those who labour.

In this way, the Federal Reserve is the modern institution through which finance capital controls the rhythm of exploitation. It dictates the cost of credit, which determines whether a worker can afford a home, whether a small enterprise survives, whether the state can finance social needs. Yet the decisions are made not by representatives of the people but by a handful of technocrats, appointed from the very banking interests they are meant to regulate. Behind the facade of technical expertise lies the dictatorship of capital in its purest form.

Inflation, in the United States, functions as a hidden mechanism of surplus extraction. When prices rise faster than wages, the real value of labour power falls, and the surplus value appropriated by capital increases. The state and the banks gain through the devaluation of public and private debt; the rich gain through rising asset values; the worker loses twice — first through the reduction of real wages, and again through the higher cost of living. It is a continuous transfer of value from labour to capital, enforced by monetary policy and concealed behind economic jargon.

Lenin's analysis of imperialism also reveals the global dimension of this process. The United States, by controlling the world's reserve currency, exports inflation to other nations. When the Federal Reserve prints money, the value of dollars held abroad declines, effectively taxing the rest of the world. American imperialism thus maintains its dominance not only through military power but through monetary hegemony. The dollar becomes a weapon of class and national exploitation, compelling other countries to finance U.S. deficits and sustain its capitalist system.

This structure of domination cannot be reformed by appeals to morality or regulation. The Federal Reserve does not act wrongly; it acts according to the very logic of capital. Its purpose is to preserve the value of money for those who own it, not for those who earn it. To expect justice from such an institution is to misunderstand its nature. As Marx wrote, the state is the form in which the bourgeoisie organizes its collective interests; the central bank is simply the modern extension of that form into the sphere of money.

The solution to this condition lies not in managing inflation, nor in demanding "fair" monetary policy, but in abolishing the domination of finance capital itself. Only when the means of money creation and credit are placed under the control of the workers — not as individuals but as a class — can the economy be organized according to human need rather than profit. Until that transformation, the Federal Reserve will remain what it was created to be: the fortress of the financial oligarchy, the engine of inflationary plunder, and the guardian of modern wage slavery.

Lenin defined imperialism as the highest and final stage of capitalism, when the concentration of production and capital reaches such a degree that monopolies and finance dominate every sphere of life. In this stage, the division between the private capitalist and the state disappears. The state becomes the organized expression of finance capital — not a neutral body standing above classes, but the direct servant and protector of the monopolies. This fusion of finance and political power is the central feature of modern imperialism, and nowhere is it more perfected than in the United States.

In earlier capitalist development, the state appeared to arbitrate between competing interests, maintaining the legal order necessary for the free play of the market. But once competition gives way to monopoly, the state's role changes fundamentally. The monopolists no longer need an impartial state; they need an obedient one. The state becomes the weapon of their domination, an instrument to secure markets abroad, suppress labour at home, and guarantee the continuous accumulation of profit.

Lenin described this process in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, showing how finance capital “has created the epoch of monopolies, which everywhere substitute monopoly for free competition.” The owners of banks, factories, railroads, and mines merge into a single financial oligarchy that directs the state itself. The ministers, generals, and bureaucrats become their political servants, while the newspapers, universities, and parliaments become their ideological servants. The line between public authority and private capital dissolves, creating what Lenin called “state-monopoly capitalism.”

In the United States, this merging is complete. The same individuals who sit on the boards of banks and corporations occupy the highest positions in government. They move effortlessly between Wall Street and Washington, writing the very laws that secure their own privileges. The Treasury, the Federal Reserve, the Pentagon, and the major corporations form one unified apparatus of class rule. Elections merely determine which faction of the capitalist oligarchy administers the same policies — protection of capital, expansion of markets, and maintenance of imperial power.

This unity of finance and state power finds its clearest expression in the American war economy. Every major conflict of the last century — from Vietnam to Iraq, from Libya to Ukraine — has served to enrich the monopolies of arms, oil, and finance. The state mobilizes the nation’s resources not for human need, but for profit. The military-industrial complex, which Lenin would have recognized as the armed wing of finance capital, absorbs vast wealth from public funds, while the people pay through inflation, taxes, and austerity. The flag and the banknote become two sides of the same coin.

Domestically, this same unity directs economic policy. When the banks collapse through their own speculation, the state intervenes to rescue them with public money. When workers demand healthcare, housing, or education, the state pleads poverty. In 2008 and again in 2020, trillions were created overnight to save capital, while the people were given temporary relief and permanent debt. This is not corruption or accident; it is the normal function of a state merged with finance capital. The state no longer acts as a regulator of capital; it is capital itself in political form.

Lenin warned that this merging of finance and state power is not a sign of capitalism’s strength but of its decay. It reveals that private ownership can no longer manage the productive forces of society through the mechanism of the market. The monopolies, unable to expand freely, turn to the state for survival — for contracts, subsidies, and military protection. Thus, imperialism is not only economic but political: it is the use of state power to sustain a decaying capitalist order.

The United States stands as the ultimate realization of this principle. The financial oligarchy controls both the domestic and international functions of the state. At home, it commands fiscal and monetary policy; abroad, it commands the army and diplomacy. The export of capital, the imposition of sanctions, the manipulation of international institutions, and the spread of military bases across the world — all serve the same purpose: the maintenance of profits for the American monopolies.

The bourgeois ideologists describe this system as “democracy” and “free enterprise,” but Lenin’s analysis cuts through the illusion. What exists in reality is the dictatorship of finance capital — a dictatorship exercised not by one man but by an entire class, hidden behind the forms of parliamentary rule and legal procedure. The worker may vote, but he cannot vote away the ownership of capital; he may change the faces of his rulers, but not the structure of rule itself.

Lenin foresaw that such a system, by fusing finance and state power, makes revolution both more necessary and more difficult. More necessary, because the concentration of wealth and authority deepens class antagonism to its breaking point; more difficult, because the ruling class commands not only money but the organized force of the state. Yet history, Lenin wrote, is stronger than any ruling class. When the contradictions of imperialism mature — when the burden of exploitation, war, and crisis becomes unbearable — the workers will turn against both the monopolies and their state.

The merger of finance capital and the state is thus both the pinnacle and the doom of capitalism. It signifies that the system has reached its highest development, where private accumulation dominates public life entirely, but it also signifies that the system has exhausted its capacity for renewal. The same unity that sustains the power of capital prepares the ground for its downfall, for once the state itself becomes an organ of monopoly, its overthrow becomes the necessary act of social liberation.

The Oligopoly of Corporations

In the United States, the concentration of capital has reached such a degree that free competition — the sacred principle of bourgeois ideology — has become a fiction. The capitalist economy no longer consists of countless independent enterprises competing on equal terms. It is dominated by a small number of gigantic monopolies that control entire branches of production, distribution, and communication. This condition, foreseen by Marx and explained in full by Lenin, marks the transition from competitive capitalism to monopoly capitalism — the economic foundation of modern imperialism.

Lenin wrote that the essence of monopoly capitalism is the “rule of a few hundred financiers and industrial magnates.” The United States today fulfills this description completely. In every decisive industry — energy, technology, pharmaceuticals, media, food, and banking — a handful of corporations hold command over the entire market. The rest of society depends on their decisions, while the state functions as their protector and agent.

In energy, a few giant conglomerates such as ExxonMobil, Chevron, and a small number of other oil and gas monopolies dictate the price of energy for the entire population. Their profits rise whenever crises occur — wars, supply shocks, or inflation — because the state ensures that their “national interests” are preserved. These interests are nothing but the interests of private capital masked as public necessity. The wars waged abroad, the sanctions imposed on other nations, and the destruction of natural environments are all carried out in defense of these monopolies.

In technology, a handful of digital corporations — Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Google, Meta, and a few others — have become the modern form of industrial capital. They control not only production and trade but also communication, information, and thought. What Engels and Marx once called the “means of production” now include the means of consciousness itself. These corporations harvest data from every individual, commodify it, and sell it back as profit. They shape culture, politics, and social behaviour, creating a new digital proletariat whose labour and life are constantly monitored and monetized.

In pharmaceuticals and healthcare, the domination is equally complete. A few giant companies — Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson, Merck, and their allies — control the production of medicine and medical technology. They dictate prices not according to social need but to profit. Illness becomes a market; the patient becomes a source of revenue. Even the state’s public health institutions serve these monopolies through subsidies, contracts, and patent protection. The result is that the working people of the United States, while paying more for healthcare than any people in the world, remain burdened by debt and denied universal medical care.

This concentration of power has created what Lenin described as the financial oligarchy — a fusion of industrial, banking, and state power. The owners of these monopolies are not thousands, nor even hundreds of thousands, but a few hundred individuals and families. They appear in the lists of billionaires; they hold seats on multiple boards of directors; they finance political campaigns, media networks, and universities. Their wealth gives them the ability to command the life of the nation without ever appearing in public as rulers.

The ideology of “free enterprise” conceals this reality. The bourgeois press speaks of competition, innovation, and consumer choice, yet the market is ruled by agreements among monopolies. Prices are fixed not by supply and demand but by coordinated decision. Entry of new firms is blocked by patents, political influence, and control of credit. The supposed dynamism of American capitalism is maintained by absorbing or destroying smaller competitors. In Marx’s terms, “one capitalist kills many,” and in Lenin’s age of monopoly, this process has become institutionalized.

The **state** is fully integrated into this oligopolistic structure. Its policies on taxation, trade, labour, and war are written in the language of corporate interest. The state finances the monopolies with public money, bails them out in crisis, and suppresses any attempt by workers to challenge their rule. In return, the monopolies ensure the stability of the system by maintaining a constant flow of capital into the political process. The two major parties of the bourgeoisie — Democrat and Republican — are simply two administrative committees of this same oligarchy.

This domination of the few over the many reveals the full maturity of capitalism in the United States. Marx showed that the accumulation of capital inevitably leads to the concentration of wealth. The United States is the living demonstration of this law. While a few hundred capitalists accumulate trillions, the majority of the population faces stagnating wages, debt, and insecurity. The productive forces have become social, involving millions of workers acting collectively, but the ownership remains private, controlled by a few. This contradiction

— between social production and private appropriation — is the central contradiction of capitalism, and it burns most fiercely in the United States.

The oligopoly system also exposes the decay of capitalism's progressive role. In its early stages, competition forced innovation and expansion of production. Under monopoly, innovation becomes a means of control. The monopolies do not create new technology to free humanity, but to maintain dominance. They patent life-saving medicines, restrict energy technologies, and manipulate digital platforms to extract more surplus from labour. Productivity increases, but the benefits do not reach the workers; instead, they serve to deepen exploitation and dependence.

Lenin described monopoly capitalism as parasitic and decaying. The American oligopolies live off speculation, mergers, and financial manipulation more than actual production. Their profits come less from creating new value and more from appropriating existing value produced by others. This parasitism spreads through the entire economy: stock buybacks replace industrial investment, speculation replaces development, and the real needs of society — housing, healthcare, education, environmental balance — remain unsatisfied.

The domination of a few hundred capitalists thus defines not only the structure of the economy but the entire way of life. It shapes culture, politics, education, and even the aspirations of individuals. It creates a society in which every human relation is mediated by capital, where freedom means the ability to consume and power means ownership of shares.

But this concentration also creates the conditions for its own overthrow. The very unity of the oligopoly exposes its fragility. When crises strike, when markets collapse, when wars exhaust the state, the dependence of the entire system on a few monopolies becomes a source of instability. The workers, united by the same system that exploits them, begin to recognize their collective power. The same socialization of production that serves the monopolies today can, under new ownership, serve the people tomorrow.

The oligopoly of corporations is the ultimate form of capitalist rule. It is the complete realization of Marx's law of accumulation and Lenin's analysis of imperialism. It shows that capitalism has reached its limit — a system in which a few command the labour of the many, where private greed governs social life, and where the state, economy, and ideology are fused into one mechanism of domination. Yet within this decaying structure lies the potential for a new order — one in which the means of production, now social in fact, will finally become social in ownership, and the collective power of labour will replace the private tyranny of capital.

Marx foresaw that capitalism, by its very nature, would lead to the concentration and centralization of wealth in ever fewer hands. He described this as one of the fundamental laws of capitalist accumulation. Competition, which at first appears as the driving force of progress, becomes the instrument through which small capitals are devoured by large ones. "One capitalist kills many," Marx wrote, and through this process capital grows in size, while the number of its owners diminishes.

In the United States, this law has reached its purest and most complete realization. The entire structure of the economy, culture, and state reveals the domination of concentrated capital. What Marx analysed in the England of the nineteenth century — the early stage of concentration — has matured in the United States into a total system of monopolistic control. Here, the accumulation of capital has ceased to be an outcome of competition; it is a mechanism of permanent domination.

The statistics speak with the clarity of material fact. A fraction of one percent of the population owns the majority of the nation's wealth. The three richest individuals possess more than the bottom half of the entire population combined. A few hundred corporations determine the flow of production, trade, and employment. This is not an accidental inequality; it is the logical end of the process Marx uncovered — the concentration and centralization of capital as capitalism develops.

Marx distinguished between *concentration* and *centralization*. Concentration arises naturally from accumulation — the reinvestment of surplus value. Centralization occurs through the absorption of smaller capitals by larger ones — mergers, bankruptcies, takeovers. In the United States, these two processes have fused. Every economic crisis accelerates both. Recessions, which ruin small and medium enterprises, strengthen the monopolies; crises serve as purges through which the giants emerge even larger. The 2008 financial collapse, for example, destroyed thousands of smaller firms while consolidating power in a few megabanks and corporations. The pandemic crisis did the same, enriching the monopolies of technology and finance while millions of workers lost their livelihoods.

This process expresses not the vitality but the decay of capitalism. The productive forces of society are immense, but they are no longer developed for social benefit. Capital accumulates not to expand production, but to preserve ownership. Marx called this the transformation of accumulation into hoarding — capital becomes a means of command, not creation. In the United States, capital's purpose is not to meet needs but to maintain dominance. The monopolies buy back their own stocks instead of building factories; they speculate on assets rather than produce goods; they accumulate power rather than progress.

Lenin saw this stage as the passage from capitalism to imperialism — the point at which concentration becomes the defining characteristic of the system. When banks and industry merge, when finance commands the state, when the number of true owners can be counted in hundreds, capitalism no longer develops the world's productive capacity but parasitically feeds on it. The United States embodies this law. Its industrial giants long ago transformed into financial empires; its productive labour is subordinated to the dictates of profit; and its entire society is shaped by the needs of this concentrated capital.

This concentration also defines the social structure. The working class, deprived of any ownership, becomes the absolute majority. The middle strata, once thought to be the stabilizing force of bourgeois democracy, are steadily dissolved. Independent farmers, small entrepreneurs, and professionals are absorbed into the orbit of monopoly capital, dependent on the corporations for survival. The polarization Marx predicted — a few at the top, the

many at the bottom — now defines the American social pyramid with mathematical precision.

The ideology of the “free market” survives only as a mask. The real relations are those of command and subordination. Prices, wages, credit, and even the direction of technological development are determined by the concentrated power of the monopolies. The capitalist class no longer needs to compete; it plans collectively through boards, think tanks, and state institutions — but plans only for its own enrichment. Marx foresaw this contradiction: the socialization of production without the socialization of ownership. Society functions collectively, yet ownership remains private. The result is stagnation for the many and luxury for the few.

This concentration of capital reveals not only the injustice but also the inevitability of capitalism’s end. The very process that built the modern economy — accumulation and centralization — creates the conditions for its transformation. As Marx wrote, “Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital... grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation.” But he also added: “This centralization becomes a lever for the transformation of the capitalist mode of production into socialized production.”

The United States is the living proof of this dialectical movement. Its concentrated capital has built the most productive system in human history, yet that same concentration has turned production into servitude and abundance into scarcity. The same giant corporations that dominate society demonstrate daily that the means of production are already social — operated by thousands of workers, engineers, and administrators — yet the ownership of their products remains private. The contradiction between collective labour and private profit cannot last forever.

Thus, Marx’s law of concentration has reached its ultimate stage on American soil. The economic foundation of capitalism — private ownership of socially produced wealth — has reached its absolute limit. The very perfection of this system marks its obsolescence. The concentration of capital that once created progress now creates paralysis; that once unified society under labour now divides it under finance. It is the sign that the capitalist form has completed its historical mission and prepares the way for a new one — a social order where the means of production, already collective in fact, become collective in ownership, fulfilling the thought of Marx, Engels, and Lenin in the real life of the working class.

Engels, observing the late nineteenth century, already saw in capitalism the seeds of its own transformation into monopoly control. He perceived that the development of large-scale industry, the growth of credit, and the rise of joint-stock companies were not mere technical changes but signs of a deeper process: the concentration of capital into ever fewer hands and the socialization of production under the command of private owners.

In *Anti-Dühring* and *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific*, Engels explained that the capitalist mode of production, by its own internal laws, moves toward collective forms of enterprise. Small private workshops give way to factories; factories unite into corporations; corporations merge into trusts. Production becomes increasingly social — involving thousands of workers,

engineers, and administrators — while ownership remains private. This contradiction, he wrote, is the essence of capitalism's decay.

Engels foresaw that as capital accumulated, competition would destroy itself. At first, competition stimulates progress: it compels the capitalist to reduce costs, increase productivity, and improve technology. But as production expands, only the largest firms can survive. They buy out or bankrupt the smaller, and the market becomes dominated by a handful of giants. "The anarchy of production," Engels wrote, "is replaced by the socialization of production under capitalist direction." In other words, the free market gives way to monopoly.

This insight was prophetic. In Engels' time, the early forms of monopoly were already appearing — railway combines, mining trusts, shipping cartels, and financial syndicates. He saw in these developments not a new stability but a sign that capitalism had reached its limits. The capitalist class, having socialized production within its own boundaries, had created the material conditions for socialism. The contradiction was clear: society produced collectively, but the profit went to a few owners.

Lenin would later build upon this foundation in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, showing that Engels' observations had matured into a complete new stage of capitalist development — monopoly capitalism. What Engels glimpsed as tendency, Lenin defined as structure. The merger of bank and industrial capital, the export of capital, and the division of the world among great powers were the realization of Engels' vision.

In the United States, Engels' prediction has been fulfilled with mathematical precision. The free enterprise of the nineteenth century, once celebrated as the core of American identity, has disappeared into the rule of monopolies. The economy is controlled by a few colossal corporations whose size surpasses entire nations. The competition of independent producers, which bourgeois economists still preach, survives only as a myth. The concentration of production Engels foresaw has become total.

Engels' thought helps us understand the dual character of this development. On one hand, monopoly control represents a higher level of organization — a technical progress beyond the chaotic competition of early capitalism. Production becomes planned, coordinated, and efficient, though still for profit. On the other hand, this very organization exposes the irrationality of private ownership. If production is already social in practice, why should it serve the interests of a few? Engels pointed out that monopoly is both the culmination and the negation of capitalism — the point at which the system demonstrates its ability to organize production, yet refuses to do so for social need.

This contradiction is visible everywhere in the modern United States. The monopolies control energy, technology, and communication with unmatched efficiency, yet millions live in poverty, unemployment, and insecurity. The means exist to provide abundance for all, but they are used to preserve scarcity and profit. Engels' analysis reveals the deeper truth: capitalism, in its mature form, organizes society for the few by means of the many.

For Engels, the appearance of monopolies was not merely an economic event but a historical signal — proof that capitalism was preparing its own overthrow. “The transformation of the great organizations of production and communication into state property,” he wrote, “shows that the bourgeoisie is superfluous as a class.” He meant that the technical and social conditions for socialism already existed within capitalism itself. The task was not to invent a new mode of production but to transfer ownership from the capitalist minority to the working majority.

In the United States, monopoly control demonstrates precisely this. The oligopolies of energy, technology, and finance function as vast collective enterprises — immense social machines operated by millions, yet owned by a few. Their internal planning, coordination, and division of labour already resemble the economic structure of socialism, but they are perverted by private profit. Engels’ vision makes clear that these monopolies are not progress in themselves; they are the final contradiction of capitalism, the stage at which the old relations of ownership must disappear for society to advance.

Thus, Engels’ foresight illuminates the present. The transformation of capitalism into monopoly control was not an accident or deviation; it was the inevitable result of the system’s internal laws. The United States stands as the confirmation of his analysis. The very organization of its economy — centralized, planned, and controlled by a few — proves that the capitalist mode of production has reached its historical limit. What was once the most dynamic system in human history has become a barrier to further development.

Engels’ thought therefore remains vital for understanding the modern world. He teaches that monopoly is not strength but decay, not innovation but stagnation. It reveals the contradiction between the social nature of production and the private nature of appropriation — the contradiction that can only be resolved through the conscious action of the working class. When that transformation occurs, the immense productive machinery created by monopoly will pass from serving profit to serving humanity, and Engels’ vision will find its fulfillment in reality.

Housing and Education as Instruments of Class Discipline

Housing in the United States reveals with perfect clarity how capitalism turns the basic needs of human life into instruments of domination. A home, the most elementary condition of stability and dignity, has been transformed into a commodity — an object of speculation, rent, and financial manipulation. Under the rule of monopoly capital, shelter is not built for living but for profit. The result is a system of artificial scarcity amidst material abundance, of millions homeless beside millions of vacant properties, and of a working class perpetually chained to landlords, banks, and mortgage companies.

Marx and Engels both identified the housing problem as one of the sharpest expressions of capitalist exploitation. Engels, in *The Housing Question*, wrote that the crisis of housing does not arise from a physical lack of dwellings, but from the capitalist organization of society, where houses are produced and distributed not according to need but according to profit. The

bourgeoisie, he explained, creates scarcity where there should be plenty, because scarcity raises rent and guarantees the return on capital. The same condition Engels described in nineteenth-century industrial cities exists today in American metropolises, multiplied a hundredfold.

The United States has the technical capacity and material resources to provide decent housing for every person. Yet millions are burdened with impossible rents, long-term mortgages, or homelessness. This is not an accident but a deliberate outcome of capitalist organization. The construction and real estate industries are dominated by large corporations and financial trusts that regulate supply to sustain high prices. The “housing market” is managed like any other monopoly: production is restricted, speculation is encouraged, and the basic human need for shelter becomes a permanent source of tribute to the rentier class.

The rentier, in Marx’s thought, is the capitalist who draws income not from production but from ownership. He contributes nothing to the creation of value, yet he appropriates part of the worker’s wage. In modern America, the rentier is not only the landlord but the bank and the investment fund. Housing has been absorbed into the circuit of finance capital. Mortgages are packaged, traded, and speculated upon like any other financial instrument. The house, instead of being a use-value — a place to live — becomes a financial asset, a means to extract interest.

This rentier domination extends across the entire society. The worker, compelled to pay rent or mortgage each month, must accept whatever wages the employer offers, for to lose income is to lose shelter. Thus, the housing system becomes a tool of class discipline. It binds the worker to the labour market, suppresses resistance, and enforces obedience. Even the dream of “home ownership,” celebrated by bourgeois ideology as freedom and success, is in reality a form of bondage — a lifetime debt to the bank.

The housing crisis exposes the inner contradiction of capitalism between use and exchange. Houses exist to be lived in, but under capitalism, they exist to be bought and sold. The supply of housing does not follow human need but the movement of capital. When profit is high, construction booms; when profit falls, construction stops — regardless of whether people are homeless. Empty luxury apartments rise in city centers while workers crowd in decaying buildings or sleep in the streets. The contradiction is not technical but social: society can build, but capitalism forbids it from building for those who need it.

In this system, scarcity is not natural but manufactured. Land speculation, restrictive zoning, and monopolistic control of construction materials are deliberate tools of the capitalist class. By limiting supply and inflating prices, the ruling class ensures that the worker spends an ever greater portion of his wage on rent or mortgage payments. The landlord, the developer, and the banker each take their share, leaving the worker with barely enough to live. The more productive labour becomes, the greater the tribute extracted by the rentier.

Engels saw this tendency clearly in his time: “As long as the capitalist mode of production exists, it is folly to hope for any special solution of the housing question.” His words describe precisely the American condition. The political parties promise reforms — rent control,

subsidies, affordable housing programs — yet none can alter the law of capital accumulation. Every attempt to ease the crisis merely creates new opportunities for speculation. The state builds housing only to sell it; it subsidizes rent only to secure the income of landlords.

The domination of the rentier class is inseparable from the power of finance capital. The great real estate and investment funds — BlackRock, Vanguard, and similar institutions — have become the modern landlords of entire cities. They purchase tens of thousands of homes, drive up prices, and then rent them back to the people at inflated rates. In this way, the separation between ownership and use, which Marx called the essence of alienation, becomes absolute. The worker no longer owns even the space in which he lives; he merely rents back from the capitalist what he himself built through labour.

The social consequences are immense. Families are burdened with debt for decades. Young workers delay forming families or remain mobile, rootless, without secure housing. Entire communities are destroyed by gentrification — a process through which capital displaces the poor to make room for the rich. Cities become divided into zones of luxury and zones of neglect, mirroring the class divisions of society. The working class is fragmented geographically, its solidarity weakened, its daily life controlled through the cost of rent.

This is why the housing question is not merely economic but political. It determines who rules society — those who work, or those who own. Under capitalism, housing will always serve as a means of exploitation. Under socialism, housing becomes a social right, provided on the basis of need, not profit. The immense productive capacity of the United States could solve the housing crisis within years if freed from the fetters of private property. But as long as the rentier and financier rule, scarcity will remain their instrument of control.

The American housing crisis, therefore, is the direct continuation of the contradiction Engels exposed more than a century ago. It is not a failure of policy or planning; it is the success of capital in maintaining domination. Artificial scarcity, rentier control, and lifelong debt are not accidental defects but deliberate features of the system. They are the modern form of serfdom in the age of finance — the means by which the worker is kept in submission.

Only when the means of construction, land, and credit pass from private to collective ownership will the housing question cease to be a crisis and become a matter of rational organization. Then, for the first time, shelter will cease to be a commodity and become what it always should have been — a human right.

Education under capitalism, like housing, is not organized for human development but for class discipline. The school system in the United States presents itself as a ladder of opportunity, a neutral institution through which anyone may rise by talent and effort. But when examined through the Marxist method, it reveals itself as one of the central ideological apparatuses of the bourgeois state — an instrument for reproducing the conditions of capitalist domination and training obedient workers to fit within its structure.

Marx and Engels showed that in every class society, the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. Education is the mechanism through which these ideas are instilled in the minds

of the young. It teaches not how to think critically about the world but how to accept it as given. From the earliest age, children learn to compete, to obey authority, to measure themselves by grades, and to accept hierarchy as natural. These habits are not accidental; they are the psychological preparation for the wage system. The school produces not free individuals but disciplined labour power, adjusted to the needs of capital.

Engels noted that under capitalism, education could never be truly universal or emancipatory because it is subordinated to the economic structure. Its content and form are determined by the requirements of production. The bourgeoisie needs literate, punctual, technically skilled workers who can follow orders and sustain the machinery of industry and administration. Therefore, it educates the working class only to the level necessary for that purpose. Beyond that, knowledge becomes dangerous. The system fears education that would awaken class consciousness, so it separates learning from understanding and replaces knowledge with training.

In the United States, this function has reached its most advanced form. The school system is divided according to class from the very beginning. The children of the wealthy attend private institutions that cultivate leadership, confidence, and the expectation of command. The children of the working class are sent to overcrowded public schools that emphasize obedience, discipline, and standardization. The content of education reflects this divide: the ruling class learns how to manage society, the working class learns how to serve it.

Higher education continues this process under the mask of “meritocracy.” Universities claim to reward talent, but in truth they reproduce privilege. The cost of tuition, the burden of student loans, and the control of funding by corporate and state interests ensure that education remains the domain of the few. Even within the universities, the curriculum is shaped by the needs of capital. Departments devoted to business, finance, and technology flourish, while those that cultivate critical thought — philosophy, history, social theory — are starved or subordinated to “market relevance.”

The ideology taught in schools is that of capitalism itself. Students are told that success depends on individual effort, that society is a fair competition, and that authority must be obeyed. They learn to equate freedom with career advancement, intelligence with conformity, and morality with obedience to rules. The system trains them to accept exploitation as natural, to see unemployment as personal failure, and to measure their worth by income and productivity. This is the ideological foundation of the American worker’s obedience: the internalization of the values of capital.

Lenin emphasized that education, in a class society, cannot be neutral. Every school serves one class or another. The bourgeois school produces servants of the bourgeoisie; the proletarian school must produce fighters for socialism. In capitalist America, education has been transformed into a factory for producing human material suited to the needs of monopoly capital. The school day mirrors the factory day — fixed hours, bells, supervision, and punishment for disobedience. Students learn to accept surveillance, schedules, and competition long before they enter the workplace.

This structure is not merely cultural; it is economic. The immense student debt system ensures that the worker begins life already bound to capital. The young person who wishes to learn must borrow from the banks, entering the labour market burdened by debt that compels obedience for decades. Thus, education functions as both ideological and financial subjugation. It teaches submission and enforces it through material dependence.

Even the content of schooling supports this system. History is rewritten to glorify the nation and conceal class struggle. Economics is taught as a natural science, denying its class character. Literature and art are reduced to entertainment, stripped of revolutionary meaning. Critical voices are marginalized, and those who question the system are accused of being “unrealistic” or “extremist.” In this way, the educational apparatus reproduces not only the skills but the consciousness that capitalism requires.

Engels once wrote that “the class which has the means of material production at its disposal also has control over the means of mental production.” The United States is the living embodiment of this law. The same monopolies that own the factories and banks also finance universities, publish textbooks, and control digital platforms. They shape knowledge to preserve their rule. The teacher who challenges this domination faces isolation, and the student who resists it faces exclusion.

Yet, within this apparatus, contradictions grow. The very process of education awakens in some the capacity to question. As Marx said, capitalism produces its own gravediggers — even within its schools. The worker who learns to read and think becomes capable of recognizing his exploitation. The student burdened by debt and despair begins to see that the system of “education for opportunity” is in truth education for obedience. The struggle for a new society therefore passes through the struggle for new education — one that serves not capital but humanity.

A socialist society will not abolish learning; it will liberate it. It will make education a process of creative development, not preparation for servitude. It will unite mental and manual labour, theory and practice, knowledge and life. The purpose of education will be to awaken, not to domesticate. The end of capitalist schooling will be the beginning of human education — the awakening of conscious, free, and cooperative individuals.

Lenin continued and deepened Marx’s and Engels’ thought by showing that education under capitalism is not a neutral or benevolent institution, but a mechanism by which the ruling class reproduces its own dominance. The school system, he explained, serves the bourgeois state as surely as the army and the police. It trains the population to accept the existing social order, to believe in its permanence, and to reproduce the relations of exploitation that define it.

For Lenin, bourgeois education was one of the most effective instruments of class rule because it hides its purpose behind the appearance of universality and fairness. The capitalist class does not maintain power only by force, but also by thought — by shaping the consciousness of those it exploits. Education is the organized form of this ideological control.

It gives the worker just enough knowledge to serve the system, but denies him the knowledge that would allow him to understand and challenge it.

Lenin often returned to the question of education when discussing the development of class consciousness. In his writings on the workers' movement, he exposed how bourgeois schools inculcate obedience and nationalism, training the young to identify with the state and property rather than with their own class. From childhood, students are taught to revere wealth, authority, and competition. The curriculum presents capitalism not as a historical system but as the natural and eternal form of human life. This "education" produces workers who can read instructions, operate machines, and fill bureaucratic roles — but not workers who can think critically about the nature of exploitation.

Lenin saw this as the practical realization of Marx's observation that every ruling class must produce the consciousness appropriate to its rule. The capitalist class reproduces not only its economic position but its ideological dominance through the school. The result is a society in which the worker, even before entering the labour market, has already accepted the values of his oppressor. The school teaches him punctuality, submission to authority, and competition against his peers — the psychological foundations of wage labour.

In Lenin's view, the bourgeois school was a miniature model of the capitalist system. The hierarchy between teacher and student mirrored that between employer and worker. The grading system rewarded conformity and punished independence. Discipline replaced curiosity; memorization replaced understanding. The student learned to obey rules rather than to seek truth. This form of education, Lenin argued, does not develop free individuals but produces efficient servants of capital — disciplined, fragmented, and politically passive.

Lenin also revealed that bourgeois education perpetuates class divisions through its structure as well as its content. Access to higher education depends on wealth, not talent. The children of the rich receive the best training and go on to occupy positions of command, while the children of workers are prepared for subordinate roles. The myth of "equal opportunity" conceals a system designed to reproduce inequality. The worker's child may attend school, but the path of advancement is blocked by economic barriers, cultural indoctrination, and the constant pressure of survival.

In the United States, Lenin's critique finds its fullest confirmation. The entire educational system functions as an apparatus of class reproduction. The ruling class owns the universities, funds the research, and dictates the ideological framework within which thought must operate. The curricula glorify private property, competition, and "democracy" — defined as the rule of money. Critical study of Marxism and revolutionary thought is either excluded or treated as a historical curiosity. In this way, education shapes generations of workers who can operate the machinery of capitalism but cannot imagine a world beyond it.

Even the reforms of "public education" do not escape this class character. Schools in working-class districts are underfunded, overcrowded, and regimented; they train obedience and endurance. Schools in wealthy areas cultivate leadership and self-confidence. The same state that proclaims equality of opportunity ensures inequality of outcome. This is not a

failure of policy but the success of class design. Lenin's analysis makes clear that as long as the means of production remain in bourgeois hands, the means of mental production — education, media, culture — will serve the same masters.

Lenin rejected the liberal illusion that education could be “neutral” within capitalism. He insisted that neutrality in a class society is a lie. The bourgeois school teaches bourgeois ideology; only a workers' school can teach proletarian ideology. Under socialism, education must serve to awaken class consciousness, to develop collective discipline, and to unite theory with practice. It must produce not passive citizens but active builders of a new society.

In his work on the *tasks of the youth*, Lenin called for education that would combine labour and study, uniting intellectual and manual work. He opposed the bourgeois separation of mind and body, which divides humanity into thinkers and doers, rulers and ruled. The true education of the working class, he said, must break this division by linking knowledge with productive labour and social responsibility. Only through such education could humanity overcome the alienation imposed by capitalism and prepare for communism.

Thus, Lenin's critique of bourgeois education exposes it as a central pillar of class domination. The school does not simply transmit knowledge; it reproduces the social order. It trains workers to accept exploitation and teaches the children of the bourgeoisie to administer it. The promise of upward mobility through education is a deception, for the ladder of success rests upon the continued subjugation of the working class.

The task of Marxist thought is therefore not to reform bourgeois education but to transform it entirely. The goal is not merely to provide access to existing schools, but to replace their function — to turn education from an instrument of submission into a weapon of liberation. Under socialism, learning ceases to serve private profit and becomes part of collective human development. Knowledge, freed from its role in reproducing class hierarchy, becomes a force for the conscious transformation of society.

PART III. IDEOLOGY AND POLITICS

Democracy and Bourgeois Parties

The United States presents itself as the model of democracy — the land where the people rule through free elections, where any citizen may rise to power, and where political choice expresses the will of the nation. Yet, when examined through Marxist and Leninist thought, this democracy reveals its true class character. It is not a government of the people, but a government of the bourgeoisie; not the rule of the majority, but the organized dictatorship of capital in the form of parliamentary illusion.

Marx explained that in every class society, the state is the instrument of the ruling class — the means by which one class enforces its interests over another. Bourgeois democracy,

though it appears as universal freedom and equality, merely disguises this reality. It allows the working class to choose which representatives of the capitalist class will rule over them. Engels, observing the development of parliamentary systems in Europe, wrote that democracy under capitalism is “the best possible political shell for capitalism.” It gives the form of freedom while maintaining the substance of exploitation.

Lenin developed this analysis further, exposing the real function of bourgeois democracy in the epoch of monopoly capitalism. He showed that as capitalism matures, as banks and corporations fuse with the state, the old democratic institutions become hollow. The ruling class continues to use elections and parties, not to express popular will, but to legitimize its rule. Political power becomes the shared property of the bourgeois factions, divided according to their economic interests. In the United States, these factions are embodied in the Democratic and Republican parties — two wings of the same capitalist class.

The difference between the two parties is not of principle but of method. Both defend private property, the profit system, and the global dominance of American capital. The Democrats represent the faction of finance, high technology, and urban monopolies; the Republicans represent the faction of traditional industry, energy, and agrarian capital. Their disputes are internal quarrels among the rulers over how best to administer the system, not challenges to the system itself. On the fundamental questions — property, profit, empire, and class — they are united.

Each party serves to bind a section of the population to the bourgeois order. The Republicans appeal to small proprietors, conservative workers, and sections of the petty bourgeoisie by invoking nationalism, religion, and fear of change. The Democrats appeal to urban professionals, sections of organized labour, and intellectuals by promising reform, tolerance, and inclusion. Yet both maintain the same economic foundation: the rule of monopoly capital. The apparent opposition between them conceals their unity against the working class.

Lenin called such parliamentary struggle the “game of bourgeois democracy.” It allows the people to believe they participate in power while ensuring that real power remains untouched. The working class is invited to vote every few years, to debate policies, and to choose candidates — but the ownership of the means of production, the control of finance, and the command of the state remain in the hands of the bourgeoisie. The illusion of choice stabilizes the system. The workers are divided along lines of party, race, and region, while their common class interest is obscured.

The enormous machinery of American elections — campaigns, advertising, polling, and media — serves to maintain this illusion. It transforms politics into spectacle, a marketplace of personalities and slogans. Capital finances both sides; the same corporations donate to both parties. The outcome of each election is predetermined: whichever faction wins, capital rules. This is why Lenin called bourgeois democracy “a democracy for the rich.” The poor may vote, but they do not rule; the rich may not need to vote, for they already govern.

The ideology of the two-party system performs a crucial function in maintaining class discipline. It channels social discontent into safe directions. When the worker is dissatisfied,

he is told to vote for the “other” party. When the system fails, he is told it is the fault of bad leaders, not the system itself. Thus, the anger of the oppressed never threatens the foundations of capital; it circulates harmlessly within the boundaries of bourgeois politics.

The state apparatus — the courts, the police, the military, and the bureaucracy — remains constant beneath the changing governments. This continuity is not the strength of democracy but the permanence of class rule. The policies of both parties may differ in form — more taxes or fewer, more regulation or less — but all preserve the sanctity of private property and the authority of capital. No party of the bourgeoisie can legislate against its own class.

Lenin warned that in the imperialist epoch, democracy and dictatorship intertwine. The same system that proclaims freedom at home practices oppression abroad. The United States, while celebrating its democracy, maintains an empire of bases, wars, and sanctions — all supported by both parties. At home, police repression, surveillance, and corporate control of media reveal that democracy exists only in form. The reality is rule by a financial oligarchy that dictates both domestic and foreign policy.

The workers’ participation in bourgeois elections does not alter this structure. It is necessary only when used consciously — not to strengthen the illusion of democracy, but to expose it. Lenin urged the proletariat to use the institutions of bourgeois democracy as a platform to reveal their falsity, to educate and organize the masses for revolutionary struggle. The goal is not to perfect bourgeois democracy but to move beyond it — to replace it with a workers’ democracy based on collective ownership and direct participation in production and governance.

In the United States, the task remains the same. The worker must see that both parties of capital are his enemies; that his real struggle is not between blue and red, liberal and conservative, but between labour and capital. As long as the economic foundation remains unchanged, political change will be illusion. Real democracy begins only when the power of the bourgeoisie ends — when the factories, banks, and land pass into the hands of the workers themselves.

The two parties of capital are the political expression of one ruling class. Their unity behind the mask of opposition is the most refined form of bourgeois domination. Their collapse will mark not the end of democracy, but its beginning — the first step toward a true democracy of labour, where human freedom replaces profit as the guiding principle of social life.

The appearance of opposition between “right” and “left” within the bourgeois political system is one of the most effective illusions through which capitalism preserves its rule. It gives the people the sense of choice, conflict, and movement, while the underlying class structure remains untouched. Beneath the noise of partisan struggle, the unity of capital endures. This false dualism is not a sign of democracy, but a symptom of bourgeois control perfected to its highest form.

Marx and Engels already observed that in bourgeois society, every great political conflict conceals the struggle between classes. Yet within the surface of politics, these class divisions

appear in distorted forms — as disagreements over policy, morality, or national identity. The bourgeoisie, having mastered the art of ideology, presents its internal divisions as the total field of political life. Thus, the working class is trapped in a theatre where every choice leads back to the same masters.

Lenin, studying the politics of advanced capitalist nations, described this phenomenon as “the substitution of form for content.” As capitalism develops into monopoly, the old parties that once represented distinct sections of the bourgeoisie fuse in interest. But they must preserve the illusion of diversity to maintain legitimacy. Therefore, political life becomes a managed conflict — the “right” defending tradition and order, the “left” demanding reform and compassion — both operating within the limits of capitalist property.

In the United States, this false dualism is perfected in the opposition of Republicans and Democrats. Each claims to represent different values and visions of society; each accuses the other of destroying the nation. Yet both defend the sacred pillars of capitalism: private property, profit, the wage system, and imperial power. When war is to be waged, both unite; when capital demands bailout, both comply; when the working class demands justice, both resist. The “right” and “left” are two hands of the same body, serving the same head — finance capital.

The illusion of opposition has a deep social function. It divides the working class along artificial lines. The “right” mobilizes the worker’s fear, prejudice, and national pride; the “left” channels his hope, morality, and guilt. Each captures a section of the exploited and binds it to one wing of the ruling class. The result is paralysis. The worker fights his neighbour, not his boss; he sees the enemy in another citizen, not in the system that exploits both.

This false dualism extends beyond politics into culture and everyday life. The media, owned by the same monopolies that finance both parties, amplifies the spectacle of conflict. It constructs an endless drama of outrage and division that fills every screen and every conversation. Yet, on the essential questions — who owns, who works, who profits — silence reigns. The workers are taught to debate symptoms while ignoring causes, to argue over moral postures while their labour continues to enrich the same ruling class.

The universities and intellectuals, dependent on state and corporate funding, reproduce this ideological framework. They divide thought into “liberal” and “conservative” schools, each criticizing the other but never the system itself. Social science becomes an exercise in describing surface movements without touching the foundation. Even radicalism is permitted — as long as it remains within the boundaries of bourgeois democracy and avoids the word capitalism.

Lenin exposed this mechanism in his analysis of reformism and opportunism. In advanced capitalist nations, he wrote, the bourgeoisie maintains control not only through repression but through corruption — the creation of a privileged layer within the working class that identifies with the ruling class. This layer becomes the social base for the “left” wing of capital, which promises progress and reform while protecting the system. In the United

States, this appears as the alliance between corporate liberalism, professional managers, and sections of organized labour — a bloc that speaks in the language of justice but acts in the interests of monopoly.

The “right,” in turn, preserves order through fear and reaction. It defends property and hierarchy openly, mobilizing nationalism and religion to sanctify inequality. The “left” defends property and hierarchy covertly, in the name of fairness and progress. One appeals to the instincts of domination, the other to the emotions of compassion, but both reinforce submission to the same economic structure. Marx called this the “rotation of parties” — a change in political form without change in social content.

The most dangerous effect of this false dualism is the fragmentation of class consciousness. The worker identifies not as a member of a class but as a supporter of a party, a tribe, or an ideology. He defends his oppressor if that oppressor shares his party label. Thus, the unity of capital is mirrored by the disunity of labour. The bourgeoisie, though divided in rhetoric, remains united in purpose; the workers, though united in condition, remain divided in thought. This is the triumph of bourgeois ideology.

To expose this deception is the first task of Marxist analysis. The opposition between “right” and “left” within capitalist politics is false because it excludes the only true opposition: that between labour and capital. Until this reality is recognized, the working class will continue to fight in the arena of its enemies, mistaking the shadows of politics for power itself.

Lenin taught that real politics begins only when the workers step outside the framework of bourgeois parties and build their own organization — one that expresses their class interest directly. The end of the false dualism will come not through compromise between right and left, but through the rise of a new force that represents neither faction of the bourgeoisie, but the independent power of the proletariat.

In this sense, the entire spectacle of American politics — the debates, campaigns, and endless divisions — is not democracy but its negation. It is the form through which the unity of capital disguises itself. Beneath the noise of partisan warfare, the machinery of exploitation runs smoothly. Real opposition will begin only when the working class recognizes that both banners it has been taught to follow are raised by the same enemy.

Marx’s *The Class Struggles in France, 1848–1850* stands as one of the clearest demonstrations of the materialist analysis of bourgeois democracy. In it, Marx dissected the illusions of the democratic republic that emerged after the 1848 revolution, showing how every form of “people’s government” under capitalism is, in essence, the organized power of the bourgeoisie over the working class. His thought there provides the key to understanding the political system of the United States today — a society that presents itself as the highest form of democracy, yet in truth is ruled by the narrowest financial oligarchy in history.

Marx began his analysis from the simple fact that political forms cannot be understood apart from their class content. The republic proclaimed in 1848 was not a neutral victory for “the people” but the political expression of bourgeois property interests. The working class,

having helped overthrow the monarchy, found itself excluded from power. The new “democratic” state defended the old relations of capital and wage labour. The revolution replaced the crown with parliament, but not the rule of one class by another.

In Marx’s analysis, bourgeois democracy arises as the political form best suited to capitalism’s needs. It grants political equality while preserving economic inequality. Every citizen has one vote, but only the capitalist controls the means of production, credit, and state power. This formal equality conceals real domination. The ballot gives the worker the illusion of participation while ensuring that no election can alter the ownership of property. Marx called this “the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie in democratic form.”

Marx observed that the bourgeoisie uses democracy to rule not by suppressing the people outright, but by dividing and deceiving them. Through parties, the press, and parliament, it channels class conflict into safe political disputes. The worker, seeing the variety of parties and programs, mistakes appearance for substance and believes that change can come through the ballot box. Meanwhile, the material power of capital — its control of factories, banks, and the army — remains untouched.

In *The Class Struggles in France*, Marx exposed how even the most radical forms of bourgeois democracy collapse when the class struggle sharpens. When the workers attempted to use democratic rights for their own emancipation, the bourgeois republic revealed its true nature. It turned from tolerance to repression, from liberalism to dictatorship. The June insurrection of 1848, in which the French workers were massacred by the “democratic” government, proved Marx’s point: democracy is permitted only so long as it does not threaten the rule of capital. When property is endangered, the bourgeoisie abandons democracy without hesitation.

This analysis anticipated all later developments of bourgeois politics, especially in advanced capitalist states like the United States. Here too, democracy functions as the mask of class rule. The same mechanism Marx described operates in modern form. Political rights are universal in law but unequal in practice. The worker’s vote counts no more than the billionaire’s, but the billionaire owns the media that shapes opinion, the banks that finance campaigns, and the institutions that decide policy. The working class may vote, but it does not govern.

Marx also uncovered the dialectical movement within bourgeois democracy: its tendency to alternate between liberal openness and authoritarian reaction. When the working class is passive, the bourgeoisie allows democracy to flourish; when the workers begin to move, the mask drops and repression begins. The history of the United States — from the suppression of strikes and uprisings to the persecution of radicals — repeats this pattern. The form of democracy remains; the content shifts according to the needs of capital.

In the same work, Marx analyzed the political parties of the bourgeois republic and found that they all represented different fractions of capital — industrial, financial, and landed — each seeking to rule in its own interest while maintaining the general domination of the bourgeoisie. Their quarrels were real but limited to the methods of exploitation. None

questioned the system itself. The working class, he argued, must therefore form its own independent party, one that fights not for a place within the bourgeois republic but for its overthrow.

This insight retains full force in the present. The Democrats and Republicans of the United States are the heirs of those same bourgeois factions Marx described in 1848. They quarrel over methods — tax rates, tariffs, social policies — but their unity lies in the defense of private property and imperial power. Their democracy is the modern version of what Marx saw in France: a system of alternating factions masking the permanent rule of capital.

Marx's *The Class Struggles in France* also contains an important warning against illusions in gradual reform. He showed that the bourgeois republic, though it may grant temporary concessions to the workers, will revoke them as soon as they threaten profit. Every reform under capitalism is conditional, temporary, and reversible, because it depends on the continued dominance of the capitalist class. The workers can win victories only through struggle, not through faith in the goodwill of democratic institutions.

Finally, Marx revealed the revolutionary significance of this contradiction. Bourgeois democracy, by granting limited political freedom, also creates the conditions for its own exposure. The worker who learns to speak, write, and organize under democratic forms eventually discovers the limits of those freedoms. Through this process, the working class develops its own political consciousness — the realization that true democracy cannot exist without the abolition of class rule.

Thus, in *The Class Struggles in France*, Marx laid the foundation for the Marxist understanding of bourgeois democracy as both a form of domination and a stage in the awakening of the proletariat. It is the shell within which the contradiction between social production and private ownership becomes politically visible. The lesson is timeless: democracy under capitalism is always a democracy for the owners of capital, and its liberation can only come when the working class transforms it into a democracy of labour — not the democracy of the ballot, but the democracy of the workshop, the commune, and collective power.

The Cult of Individualism

The most enduring and seductive myth of capitalism is the cult of individualism — the belief that every person is free, self-made, and independent, that success or failure rests solely on personal effort, and that the social order merely reflects the sum of individual choices. In the United States, this ideology has become the spiritual foundation of the entire system. It pervades politics, education, religion, and culture. It serves as both justification and concealment for exploitation. Beneath the banner of freedom, the worker is bound in the most complete dependence known to history — dependence on capital.

Marx and Engels exposed this contradiction at the heart of bourgeois freedom. In the *Communist Manifesto*, they wrote that the bourgeois epoch “has substituted naked,

shameless, direct, brutal exploitation for the old religious and political illusions.” Yet, to preserve its rule, the bourgeoisie had to create new illusions — above all, the illusion of individual freedom. Under feudalism, people were bound by open ties of dependence: serf to lord, subject to monarch. Capitalism broke those visible chains, but replaced them with invisible ones — the wage, the market, and private property.

The worker is formally free. He is not owned by the capitalist; he may choose whom to work for, where to live, and what to consume. But this freedom is purely legal, not material. To live, he must sell his labour power. He owns no means of production, no land, no tools; he possesses only his capacity to work, which becomes a commodity on the market. His “choice” is therefore a choice between starvation and submission. Marx called this the “double freedom” of the worker: free to sell his labour, and free of all means of subsistence.

In this relation lies the core of the capitalist illusion. The system presents the contract between worker and employer as a voluntary exchange between equals. But equality in law conceals inequality in fact. The capitalist owns the means of production and commands the process of labour; the worker must obey to survive. The property relation defines the social relation. Freedom, within this system, means only the freedom to sell oneself in the market.

Engels described this inversion with clarity: “In reality, the worker remains enslaved by the machine, by the factory, and above all by the capitalist.” The bourgeois notion of freedom excludes the majority of humanity, for it assumes ownership of property as its condition. In the United States, where property is concentrated in the hands of a few, the freedom of the rich is purchased by the servitude of the poor. Every right of the owner — to employ, to dismiss, to charge rent, to set prices — is the mirror of the worker’s unfreedom.

Lenin extended this critique to the imperialist stage. He showed that under monopoly capitalism, the illusion of freedom becomes even more necessary to maintain domination. The worker, increasingly alienated and powerless, must be persuaded that he is the master of his own fate. Bourgeois ideology glorifies the individual entrepreneur, the self-made man, as proof that anyone can ascend through talent and hard work. Yet this figure is a myth. The vast majority of workers remain chained to wages, debt, and insecurity, while the few who succeed do so through the system’s collective exploitation. The individual triumph is built upon the labour of the masses.

In the United States, the cult of individualism reaches religious intensity. The capitalist system presents itself as the ultimate expression of liberty, and every social failure is blamed on the individual. Poverty is attributed to laziness, unemployment to lack of skill, and illness to personal irresponsibility. In this way, social contradictions are privatized. The worker blames himself instead of the system. The capitalist does not need to repress; he needs only to convince the worker that he is free.

This ideology serves several functions. First, it isolates the worker from his class. By seeing himself as an individual competitor rather than part of a collective producer, he loses the sense of solidarity that could unite him with others. Competition replaces cooperation; envy replaces fraternity. The worker becomes the enemy of his neighbour, each striving for

advancement at the expense of the other. In Marx's terms, "the mutual envy and hostility of the workers are the immediate result of competition."

Second, the cult of individualism disguises the social character of production. Modern industry and technology are collective by nature — thousands of workers cooperate in factories, networks, and digital systems. Yet the profit appears as the achievement of a single "visionary" entrepreneur. The collective product of labour is appropriated as the property of one person or corporation, who then receives adulation as a genius. This ideological inversion transforms collective creation into personal glory, thereby sanctifying private appropriation.

Third, this ideology maintains social peace by transforming political questions into moral ones. The worker is told not to question the system, but to improve himself. Education, therapy, and religion all reinforce the message that success depends on personal virtue. When he fails, the worker feels guilt rather than anger. He does not rebel; he strives harder. This self-blame is the psychological mechanism that replaces the whip and the chain in modern capitalism.

Marx revealed that bourgeois freedom is always tied to property. The freedom of the capitalist is the freedom to exploit; the freedom of the worker is the freedom to be exploited. The bourgeoisie praises freedom because it means freedom from social responsibility — the right to profit from others without restraint. True freedom, in Marxist thought, begins only when property ceases to dominate human life, when the means of production become common, and when labour serves human need rather than capital.

The cult of individualism thus serves as both the mask and the prison of capitalist society. It hides the collective nature of production and prevents the collective organization of resistance. It teaches the worker to identify with the interests of the bourgeoisie, to dream of becoming what oppresses him. In the United States, this illusion is enforced by every institution — school, church, media, and law — until it appears as common sense.

But the contradictions of this ideology are growing. The more capitalism destroys real individuality — through debt, surveillance, and corporate conformity — the more it must preach individualism. The worker, told he is free, finds himself powerless; told he is independent, he depends on credit; told he is self-made, he produces value for others. This dissonance awakens thought. As Marx wrote, the "material conditions of existence" ultimately break the power of illusion. When the worker recognizes that his individual fate is bound to the collective fate of his class, the cult of individualism begins to collapse.

True individuality, Marx and Engels taught, will only be realized in a communist society — a society in which each person's development is the condition for the development of all. Only when the relations of property no longer divide humanity will individuality cease to be a privilege and become a universal condition. Then the worker, no longer enslaved by necessity, will discover the freedom that capitalism could only counterfeit: the freedom of conscious, collective creation.

Engels exposed with great clarity the fraudulent character of bourgeois “freedom.” He explained that under capitalism, the freedom of the worker is nothing more than the freedom to sell his labour power — to sell himself piece by piece, hour by hour, to the capitalist who owns the means of production. This is not freedom in the human sense, but a juridical disguise for dependence. Engels’s analysis revealed that what the bourgeoisie calls “liberty” is, in essence, the legalized form of exploitation.

In *Anti-Dühring* and in his writings alongside Marx, Engels demonstrated that the wage relation, the central bond of capitalist society, is founded on a peculiar kind of freedom. The worker is not a slave in the old sense; he is not owned by another person. He is “free” in two ways: free from personal bondage, and free from any means of production or subsistence. Because he owns nothing but his capacity to work, he must sell this capacity to survive. His “freedom” is therefore the condition of his subjugation.

Engels described this irony with precision: the worker’s legal equality before the law conceals his economic dependence. Both worker and capitalist enter into the labour contract as “free” individuals, yet one commands and the other obeys. The form of equality masks the content of domination. The capitalist buys labour power as a commodity, and through the labour process extracts surplus value — unpaid labour — from the worker. The entire system of bourgeois law and morality rests upon this illusion of freedom.

This formulation reveals the central deceit of bourgeois ideology. The capitalist boasts of having abolished servitude and created a world of free exchange. But Engels showed that the wage relation merely transforms the old, visible chains into invisible economic ones. The serf was bound to the land; the worker is bound to the market. The serf worked for his lord by compulsion; the worker works for his employer by necessity. In both cases, labour serves another’s profit. The difference is only in form, not in substance.

In capitalist society, the ruling class proclaims freedom as its highest ideal because freedom serves its interests. The right to own property, to hire labour, to profit from others’ work — these are presented as universal rights, though they belong only to those who already possess property. Engels pointed out that the bourgeois concept of freedom arises from the conditions of commodity exchange. It is the freedom of buyers and sellers on the market, abstracted from all material inequalities. It assumes that all individuals meet as equals, while ignoring that one side controls the means of life.

This ideological structure remains the foundation of the United States. The American worker is told that he is free because he can choose his employer, move from job to job, and sign contracts voluntarily. Yet in reality, his existence depends on continuous submission to capital. He cannot freely refuse work, for refusal means hunger, homelessness, and ruin. The capitalist can choose whether to employ; the worker must sell his labour or die. Engels’s formulation captures this contradiction perfectly: the worker’s “freedom” is the freedom of the starving man to sell his life for a wage.

Engels saw that this false freedom extends beyond the factory into every sphere of life. The worker is told he is free to buy goods, to live where he wishes, to speak as he pleases — but

every one of these freedoms is limited by money. The right to buy without the means to buy is no right at all. Thus, the so-called “rights of man” under capitalism are only the rights of the property owner, generalized in theory but denied in practice.

This understanding was central to Marx and Engels’s materialist critique of bourgeois society. They showed that political freedom, divorced from economic freedom, is an empty form. So long as property remains private, freedom exists only for the owners of property. Engels wrote that the abolition of exploitation — the social ownership of the means of production — is the only foundation upon which genuine human freedom can stand. Without this, every right is a right to continue exploitation under new names.

In the United States, the system of wage labour represents the culmination of Engels’s analysis. The worker’s freedom to sell his labour is celebrated as the essence of the “American Dream.” Yet it is precisely this relation that enslaves him to debt, to the market, to the uncertainty of unemployment. His individuality, his time, his creativity — all become commodities. He does not sell merely what he produces, but his capacity to live. The market, which claims to express human freedom, reduces freedom to exchange value.

Engels’s insight strips away the moral façade of capitalism. The worker’s legal equality and political rights do not alter his material position. He is a “free man” who must ask permission to work, a “citizen” who cannot afford to live without selling himself. The bourgeoisie calls this condition liberty; Marx and Engels called it wage slavery.

True freedom, in Engels’s view, begins only where the domination of property ends — where the means of life are held in common, and where labour is directed toward social need rather than private gain. Only in such conditions can the individual cease to be a commodity and become a conscious participant in collective creation.

Thus, Engels’s formulation — freedom as the worker’s right to sell his labour power — remains the most concise expression of capitalist hypocrisy. It reveals that bourgeois liberty is not the liberation of humanity, but the liberation of capital. It frees the bourgeoisie from moral and social responsibility while chaining the worker in the name of choice. The path to real human freedom lies not in defending this “right,” but in abolishing the need for it — in creating a society where no one must sell his life to live.

Media and Consciousness Control

Lenin understood long before the age of television, digital networks, and social media that the press and communication organs of bourgeois society are not neutral conveyors of information but weapons in the class struggle. He warned that the bourgeoisie, having lost its progressive role, maintains its rule not only through the economic and political domination of the workers, but also through the manipulation of consciousness. The press, he said, is the organized system through which the ruling class spreads its thought, silences opposition, and shapes the minds of the people to accept their own exploitation.

In Lenin's time, the press was already concentrated in the hands of large capitalists and political parties serving them. The newspapers of Europe and America claimed to represent "public opinion," but in reality, they created that opinion in the image of their masters. Lenin wrote that "freedom of the press in bourgeois society means freedom for the rich to own the press, and freedom for the poor to be misled by it." This simple statement exposes the essence of modern media power. Under capitalism, information is a commodity, and truth is subordinate to profit and class interest.

The bourgeois press presents itself as diverse, offering multiple perspectives and debate. Yet Lenin noted that this apparent plurality hides a deeper unity — the unity of class ideology. The "liberal" and "conservative" newspapers may differ in tone or emphasis, but both defend the same fundamental premises: private property, the sanctity of profit, the legitimacy of the capitalist state, and the supposed permanence of the existing order. No major outlet questions these foundations, because all are funded, owned, or controlled by those who benefit from them.

In Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?*, he emphasized that control of consciousness is as crucial to the bourgeoisie as control of production. The ruling class does not rely only on repression; it relies on consent — a consent manufactured daily through the press, the school, and the pulpit. "The most dangerous slave," Lenin wrote, "is the one who imagines himself free." By filling the minds of workers with bourgeois values, the capitalist press produces precisely that type of obedient slave — one who defends his master while believing he acts independently.

The United States has perfected this mechanism to a degree that even Lenin could only have foreseen in outline. The modern media system — television networks, newspapers, film studios, internet platforms, and social media — is concentrated in the hands of a few corporate conglomerates. These monopolies function as the ideological department of finance capital. They set the limits of permissible discussion, define what is "mainstream" and what is "radical," and regulate the boundaries of acceptable thought. Their power lies not in open censorship, but in the constant repetition of partial truths that shape perception.

The modern American worker is surrounded by an ocean of information but deprived of understanding. Every channel of communication — news, entertainment, education, advertising — reinforces the same narrative: that capitalism is eternal, the United States is benevolent, and the problems of society arise from individual failure or external enemies. The media teaches resignation masked as optimism, cynicism disguised as realism, and consumerism presented as freedom.

Lenin would recognize this as the perfection of what he called *bourgeois ideology made flesh*. In his writings on imperialism, he showed that the domination of finance capital requires the domination of thought. The export of capital abroad must be justified by ideology at home — the press and the state together manufacture consent for wars, sanctions, and exploitation. The people are told that such actions defend "democracy" or "human rights," while in reality they defend markets and monopolies. The media is the propaganda ministry of imperialism, even when it calls itself independent.

Under capitalism, Lenin observed, the press does not reflect the people's consciousness; it shapes it in the image of capital. The journalist, like the worker, sells labour — in this case, mental labour — to survive. The editors and owners decide what is published, and what is buried. The truth, when it threatens profit or power, is silenced not by decree but by omission. The bourgeoisie needs no ministry of censorship; it controls what people see and think by controlling the conditions of publication.

In the United States, this control extends beyond traditional media into the digital realm. The internet, once praised as a force of liberation, has become another instrument of monopoly. A handful of technology corporations own the platforms where most human communication now occurs. They gather data, manipulate attention, and determine which voices are amplified or buried. What Lenin described as the capitalist press has evolved into a global network of surveillance and influence — the perfected “collective propagandist, agitator, and organizer” of the bourgeois class.

Lenin warned that the working class cannot defeat this apparatus by passively consuming it or by appealing to its fairness. He insisted that the proletariat must create its own organs of information — its own press, literature, and communication — as weapons of class struggle. In his time, this meant the revolutionary newspaper, the *Iskra*, which he called “a collective propagandist, a collective agitator, a collective organizer.” Its purpose was not merely to inform, but to awaken class consciousness. In our time, the same principle holds: the workers must control their own media or remain prisoners of bourgeois thought.

Lenin's analysis also revealed the dialectical nature of bourgeois ideology: it is strongest when it appears invisible. The most effective domination is that which convinces the dominated that no domination exists. In the American media system, this invisibility is perfected. The news is presented as objective, entertainment as apolitical, and advertising as harmless. Yet all three perform the same task — to keep the worker thinking like a consumer rather than a producer, an individual rather than a class being.

Thus, Lenin's warnings about the bourgeois press remain not only valid but prophetic. The media in advanced capitalism is the most sophisticated instrument of ideological control ever created. It manufactures illusions, regulates perception, and neutralizes dissent. It replaces experience with spectacle and solidarity with distraction. Its task is to keep the working class politically passive and spiritually dependent on the values of capital.

But Lenin also showed that no form of domination is eternal. The same technologies that serve capital can, under new social relations, serve liberation. Once the means of communication are taken from the bourgeoisie and placed under collective control, the press will cease to be a weapon of deceit and become an instrument of enlightenment. Then, for the first time, the word will serve the worker, not the master — and truth will no longer be a commodity, but a common good.

In the epoch of monopoly capitalism, Lenin explained, finance capital does not merely dominate production — it dominates the entire ideological superstructure of society. In the United States, this domination takes its purest and most developed form. The media, which

once claimed to be the “fourth estate” — a check on power — has become the organized voice of that power itself. It functions as the ideological arm of finance capital: shaping public perception, manufacturing consent, and defending the system of exploitation that sustains the bourgeois class.

Marx and Engels showed that in every epoch, the ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class. In modern capitalism, the ruling class is not the small manufacturer or local merchant, but the financial oligarchy — the owners of banks, investment funds, and transnational corporations. Their power is not confined to the economy; it extends into thought, culture, and emotion. They command not only production but communication. In the United States, this class has concentrated control of newspapers, television networks, film studios, and digital platforms into a few giant conglomerates — the media monopolies of our age.

These corporations — Comcast, Disney, Warner Bros. Discovery, Amazon, Google, Meta, and their associated financial owners — constitute a unified ideological apparatus. Though they appear to compete, they share the same economic foundation and the same political purpose: to reproduce the conditions of finance capital’s rule. Their function is not to inform the public, but to guide public opinion in a direction that protects property relations, disarms class consciousness, and maintains faith in the capitalist order.

The media performs this function through three interrelated mechanisms: **selection, framing, and repetition.**

First, **selection**: the media decides what is worthy of attention and what is to be ignored. Struggles of workers, corruption of capital, or crimes of imperialism are marginalized or silenced. The actions of the ruling class are presented as natural or inevitable, while any resistance is portrayed as disorder. This selection determines the boundaries of thought itself; what is not shown is as decisive as what is.

Second, **framing**: even when facts are presented, they are interpreted within the ideology of capital. Poverty is explained as personal failure, not as a structural product of exploitation. Wars are justified as “defense of democracy,” never as the pursuit of markets and resources. The capitalist is called a “job creator,” the worker a “consumer.” Every concept is inverted so that the oppressor appears as benefactor and the oppressed as dependent.

Third, **repetition**: through constant exposure, the media transforms ideology into common sense. The worker hears the same message from every direction — in news, entertainment, advertising, and education. He internalizes it not as propaganda but as reality itself. This repetition manufactures a consent so deep that opposition appears irrational or “extremist.” Lenin identified this as the most refined form of ideological domination: the replacement of conscious consent with unconscious conformity.

Finance capital uses the media not only to protect its power but to expand it. The global dominance of American media exports the ideology of capitalism to the entire world. Hollywood films, streaming platforms, and digital news networks spread the image of the United States as the universal model of freedom and progress. In reality, they export the

culture of consumption, individualism, and obedience. The global worker is taught to admire the wealth of his oppressor and to imitate his values, even while suffering under his domination.

The relationship between media and finance is not metaphorical but material. The same investment funds — BlackRock, Vanguard, State Street — that own shares in the major banks and weapons industries also own the largest media corporations. The same financiers who profit from debt, war, and speculation determine what the public sees and believes. The media thus functions as the cultural department of the financial oligarchy. It does not report on capital; it speaks as capital.

During crises, this unity becomes especially visible. When banks collapse or markets falter, the media calls for “stability” and “confidence,” never for justice or change. When wars are launched, it repeats the language of the state, never the suffering of the people. When workers strike, the media laments “disruption” and “losses,” not exploitation. Its loyalty is not to truth, but to the circulation of capital. The press becomes, as Lenin said, “the collective propagandist of the bourgeoisie.”

In the United States, even entertainment serves this ideological function. Films and television glorify wealth, success, and individual achievement while hiding the collective nature of labour. The hero is the entrepreneur, not the worker; the villain is disorder, not injustice. The spectator is trained to identify with the capitalist class, to aspire to join it, and to accept its morality as universal. Advertising, the purest voice of capital, completes the process — turning desire into consumption and consumption into obedience.

This ideological control is not imposed by censorship alone but through the market itself. The media corporations depend on advertising revenue from the monopolies they serve. News that threatens those interests is unprofitable; truth becomes economically impossible. Thus, the profit motive, the very foundation of capitalism, becomes the mechanism of ideological control.

Lenin’s insight into the nature of the bourgeois press applies here with undiminished force: “The press should be the instrument of the people, but in capitalist society it is the instrument of the rich.” The American media, in its modern form, is the global realization of that warning. It functions not as an independent observer but as an organ of the capitalist state — a state that itself is the organized power of finance capital.

Yet, as Marx and Lenin both understood, ideology cannot permanently suppress material reality. The more the media attempts to hide the contradictions of capitalism, the more those contradictions erupt into the consciousness of the masses through experience. The worker who lives through debt, poverty, and war will not forever believe the lies of prosperity and peace. When the words of the media cease to match the life of the people, the mask of ideology falls away.

The struggle for liberation, therefore, must include the struggle to liberate communication from capital. The press, the internet, and every instrument of speech must be wrested from

private ownership and transformed into social property — tools for collective understanding, not for manipulation. Only then can the word become again what it was meant to be: an expression of truth, a weapon of emancipation, and the conscious voice of the working class.

PART IV. IMPERIALISM AND THE WORLD ORDER

Imperialism as the Highest Stage

Lenin defined the first and fundamental feature of imperialism as the concentration of production and capital to such an extent that it creates monopolies, which play a decisive role in economic life. This concentration is not an accidental development but the inevitable result of the inner laws of capitalism discovered by Marx — the tendency of capital to accumulate, centralize, and destroy smaller competitors in its pursuit of profit. The transition from free competition to monopoly marks capitalism's highest and final stage.

Nowhere in the world has this concentration reached such magnitude as in the United States. Here, the process of accumulation, which Marx traced in its infancy in 19th-century England, has developed into its mature and most complete form. A handful of corporate empires control the key sectors of the economy: energy, banking, technology, agriculture, and communications. The so-called “free market” has disappeared behind the walls of oligopoly.

In production, the trend toward concentration is visible in every industry. The manufacturing base, once divided among thousands of firms, is now dominated by a few multinational giants — Boeing and Lockheed in aerospace, General Motors and Ford in automotive, Amazon and Walmart in distribution. In finance, a few colossal banks — JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Citigroup, and Wells Fargo — command the flow of credit, setting the terms of survival for all lesser capitals. In technology, Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Meta have merged industrial production with digital surveillance, creating new monopolies that regulate not only labour but consciousness itself.

Lenin wrote that monopoly capitalism signifies not merely economic concentration but the subordination of the entire social process to the will of a few magnates. Their decisions determine the lives of hundreds of millions, yet they act not in the interest of society but in the blind pursuit of profit. The United States, as the centre of global capital, concentrates in itself the contradictions of this stage. The same forces that have raised its productive power to unprecedented heights have also produced stagnation, inequality, and recurring crisis.

This concentration extends far beyond national borders. The monopolies headquartered in the United States command production chains that span the entire planet. They control mines in Africa, factories in Asia, plantations in Latin America, and markets everywhere. The world economy has become an appendage of American finance and industry. The laws of accumulation that Marx described within a single nation now operate on a global scale,

binding the labour of billions to the profits of a few thousand capitalists in New York, Silicon Valley, and Washington.

The concentration of production and capital also transforms the internal structure of the bourgeois class. The independent capitalist of Marx's day — the small owner who directed his own enterprise — has all but disappeared. In his place stands the manager, the financier, the corporate bureaucrat — servants of collective capital, wielding socialized wealth as private property. The ownership of the means of production is no longer individual but institutional, concentrated in investment funds and corporate boards. In the United States, a few financial firms — BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street — hold decisive shares in nearly every major company. Through them, the unity of monopoly capital becomes complete.

This concentration gives rise to both economic power and political domination. The monopolies dictate state policy, influence legislation, and determine the conditions of life for the entire population. They finance both political parties, shape foreign relations, and control the flow of information through their ownership of media and technology. The state itself becomes, as Lenin said, “the executive committee of the ruling class” — in this case, the organized power of monopoly and finance capital.

Lenin emphasized that such concentration does not bring stability but intensifies contradictions. The productive forces, now immense and socialized, clash with the narrow limits of private appropriation. Crises of overproduction, unemployment, and imperialist war arise not from scarcity but from abundance. The monopolies, unable to find sufficient profit within the home market, export capital abroad, seeking new sources of surplus value. Thus, the concentration of capital within a few hands drives the expansion of imperialism across the globe.

The United States represents the perfection of this process. Its monopolies dominate the world market; its currency serves as global money; its state defends the interests of its corporations through diplomacy, sanctions, and war. The internal concentration of capital has become the foundation of external domination. The entire planet is drawn into the orbit of American finance, bound by debt, trade agreements, and military alliances.

Yet this very concentration reveals the system's fragility. The greater the unification of capital, the deeper the antagonism between capital and labour. The wealth of the monopolies stands on the poverty of the masses; their power depends on the suppression of the worker both at home and abroad. The contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation, which Marx called the central contradiction of capitalism, has reached its highest point in the United States — a society where all production is collective, but all ownership remains private.

Thus, Lenin's first feature of imperialism — the concentration of production and capital — is not merely an economic phenomenon but the foundation of the entire imperialist order. It is the material base upon which finance, the state, and military power are built. The monopolies are the modern kings, ruling not by divine right but by the command of accumulated labour

transformed into capital. Their existence proves that capitalism has fulfilled its historical mission and exhausted its progressive role. The same concentration that gave humanity vast productive power now chains it to the irrationality of profit. The next stage — the socialization of ownership — is the only path forward from this impasse.

Lenin identified the second defining feature of imperialism as the fusion of bank capital with industrial capital — the formation of finance capital and a financial oligarchy that commands both production and credit. This synthesis marks a transformation of capitalism itself: the transition from industrial enterprise to financial domination. It is no longer the individual factory owner or banker who rules, but a collective oligarchy that unites both functions into a single mechanism of control.

In Marx's time, the banker and the industrialist often appeared as distinct figures — one lending, the other producing. But Lenin showed that under monopoly conditions, the boundaries dissolve. Industrial corporations depend on massive flows of credit to sustain production, and banks, seeking secure profits, invest directly in industry. The result is the formation of finance capital: capital that controls both the process of production and the circulation of money, thus subordinating the entire economy to the interests of the financial oligarchy.

In the United States, this merging has reached its highest and most advanced stage. The great banks — JPMorgan Chase, Citigroup, Bank of America, Wells Fargo — are not merely lenders; they are owners. Through investment, shareholding, and interlocking directorates, they exercise decisive influence over the largest industrial and technological corporations. The financial giants of Wall Street, together with institutional investors such as BlackRock, Vanguard, and State Street, represent the material realization of Lenin's concept of finance capital. They hold controlling stakes in nearly every sector: energy, defense, technology, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and communications.

This interpenetration has abolished even the semblance of separation between productive and speculative activity. The same corporations that produce real goods now engage in financial speculation on a colossal scale. Industrial conglomerates operate their own financial divisions, while banks trade in futures, derivatives, and currencies. Capital flows not according to the needs of production, but according to the pursuit of financial gain. Profit arises not from the creation of use-values but from the manipulation of money itself — what Marx called the “fetishism of capital.”

The Federal Reserve, as the central organ of American finance capital, serves as the coordinator and guarantor of this system. It represents not the interests of the people but those of the financial oligarchy. Its policy of money creation, interest rate control, and emergency bailouts ensures the continual expansion of finance capital at the expense of labour. During crises, when speculative bubbles collapse, the state intervenes not to rescue workers but to preserve the balance sheets of banks and investors. Thus, the merger of bank and industrial capital finds its political expression in the merger of finance and state power.

Lenin wrote that finance capital “strives for domination, not freedom.” In the United States, this domination is total. The industrial base of the nation has become dependent on the credit system; production itself cannot continue without the sanction of the banks. Through this dependence, finance capital dictates not only what is produced but where, how, and under what conditions. It commands governments to open markets, suppress labour movements, and privatize public assets. It determines foreign policy through its interest in global investment, ensuring the protection of capital abroad by military means.

The merging of finance and industry has also created a new ruling stratum — the financial oligarchy. This group is not composed of individual entrepreneurs in the old sense but of executives, investors, and political operatives who manage the collective wealth of the capitalist class. Their power is impersonal, bureaucratic, and transnational. They do not compete as independent capitalists but cooperate as shareholders in the same enterprises, bound by the unity of finance. This oligarchy is the real sovereign of the United States, its decisions ratified by the state and enforced by the military.

This development has profound consequences for the working class. Under industrial capitalism, exploitation occurred primarily in production — the extraction of surplus value from labour. Under finance capitalism, exploitation extends to every aspect of life: through debt, rent, and the manipulation of prices and credit. The worker pays tribute not only to his employer but to the financial institutions that dominate his existence. The wage he earns from one branch of capital is immediately claimed by another through interest, insurance, and taxation. Thus, finance capital transforms all social relations into relations of payment and debt.

The merger of bank and industrial capital also deepens the parasitic character of capitalism. Production becomes secondary to speculation; investment shifts from long-term development to short-term gain. Entire industries are reorganized or destroyed according to fluctuations in financial markets. Factories close, jobs vanish, yet profits rise, because profit no longer depends on material production but on financial manipulation. This parasitism, Lenin warned, is a symptom of capitalism’s decay — the point at which accumulation turns inward, devouring its own productive base.

In the United States, this decay manifests as the dominance of Wall Street over Main Street, of speculation over work, of finance over life. The worker, the farmer, and the small producer are trapped within a system they do not control, their labour feeding the endless hunger of finance. The American economy, though immense, functions as a mechanism for transferring value from the many to the few.

Lenin’s analysis of finance capital thus remains the key to understanding modern imperialism. The fusion of bank and industrial capital has created a structure of power that transcends national boundaries, concentrates wealth to an unprecedented degree, and subordinates every government, including the American state itself, to the interests of the financial oligarchy. This is the true face of imperialism in our time — the rule of finance capital over production, of speculation over creation, and of profit over humanity.

Lenin defined the third essential feature of imperialism as the predominance of the export of capital over the export of commodities. This marks a decisive turning point in the evolution of capitalism. In its earlier stage, nations accumulated wealth by selling goods abroad — the export of commodities produced within their borders. But as monopoly and finance capital matured, the leading capitalist powers found that their domestic markets were saturated, their profits at home insufficient, and their industrial capacity far beyond the needs of their own population. The result was a new phase of expansion — not the export of goods, but the export of capital itself.

This transformation, as Lenin wrote in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, signifies that capitalism has grown “overripe.” The monopolies, swollen with surplus capital, seek outlets for investment abroad where profits are higher, wages are lower, and resistance is weaker. Instead of trading goods, the imperialist powers invest in mines, railways, plantations, and industries in other nations. In this way, exploitation crosses borders. The worker in a foreign land becomes the source of profit for the financier at home.

The United States embodies this development in its most complete and globalized form. Having long surpassed its national market, American capitalism has transformed the entire planet into its field of investment. U.S. capital is present in every continent and nearly every nation, penetrating all forms of production — from resource extraction in Africa and Latin America to manufacturing in Asia and digital infrastructure in Europe. The world’s industries, banks, and even public institutions have become appendages of American finance.

This export of capital occurs through several interlinked mechanisms.

First, **direct investment**. American corporations own vast assets abroad — factories, oil fields, transportation networks, and service industries. These investments are not acts of cooperation but of domination. The profits extracted from cheap labour and raw materials in other countries flow back to the United States, enriching the monopolies while leaving the producing nations dependent and underdeveloped.

Second, **financial investment**. American banks and investment funds control international credit. They lend capital to foreign governments and corporations, binding them through debt. This form of domination, which Lenin foresaw, has today become the principal instrument of imperialist control. Through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and private creditors, U.S. finance dictates the economic policy of entire nations. A country’s budget, currency, and resources are shaped not by its people, but by the demands of foreign capital.

Third, **the export of fictitious capital**. With the rise of digital finance, speculation has replaced production as the main engine of accumulation. The United States exports securities, derivatives, and financial instruments — claims to value rather than value itself. These instruments circulate globally, drawing real wealth from every nation into the orbit of Wall Street. The world economy thus functions as a pyramid of paper wealth, with the U.S. dollar at its apex.

This process represents the transformation of imperialism into a *financial empire*. The old colonialism conquered territories; the new imperialism conquers economies. The export of capital replaces direct occupation with economic subjugation. A nation may appear politically independent while being completely dependent on foreign investment and credit. Lenin described this phenomenon as “the partition of the world among the capitalist combines,” and in our time, those combines are the American corporations and banks whose reach extends into every sphere of human activity.

The export of capital also explains the political and military role of the United States. Its foreign policy is the armed protection of its investments. Military bases, alliances, and interventions are justified in the name of “freedom” and “security,” but their real function is to secure the flow of profits. The wars in Iraq and Libya, the coups in Latin America, the pressure on Africa and Asia — all serve to preserve the conditions necessary for the return of capital. The army is the bodyguard of finance.

This export of capital deepens inequality both globally and within the United States itself. While American monopolies reap superprofits abroad, the domestic working class gains nothing. The wealth extracted from other nations flows upward into the hands of the financial oligarchy, while the American worker faces stagnating wages, debt, and insecurity. The “global empire” of U.S. capital rests on the exploitation of workers everywhere — foreign and domestic alike.

Marx showed that the accumulation of capital depends on the constant expansion of exploitation. Lenin demonstrated that imperialism is the final expression of this law. The export of capital is not a policy choice; it is a necessity born of overaccumulation. When profits fall at home, capital must seek new fields abroad. Thus, imperialism is not the result of greed or corruption, but of the inner logic of capitalism itself.

Yet this very expansion prepares the conditions for its downfall. As capital becomes global, so too does labour. The workers of all nations are drawn into the same system of production, their struggles increasingly united by common oppression. The contradictions that once divided centre and periphery now converge within the global structure of imperialism. The same capital that exploits the miner in Congo and the programmer in India exploits the worker in Detroit. The unity of capital creates the possibility of the unity of labour.

The export of capital, therefore, is both the expression of capitalism’s greatest power and its deepest crisis. It reveals that the system can no longer sustain itself within national boundaries, that it must expand or collapse. But expansion creates dependency, resistance, and conflict — economic, political, and military. Imperialism, as Lenin taught, is not a sign of capitalism’s strength but of its decay. The export of capital is the symptom of a system that has outgrown its historical role and now survives only through global domination.

The United States stands at the centre of this process. Its wealth, its military power, and its ideology of “global leadership” all rest upon the export of capital — the transformation of the world into a field of investment for American finance. It is the empire of money, not of

liberty; of profit, not of people. And as every empire before it, it carries within itself the contradictions that will bring its end.

Lenin defined the fourth characteristic of imperialism as *the division of the world among international monopolist capitalist associations*. This feature expresses the culmination of all earlier tendencies — concentration of production, the merging of bank and industrial capital, and the export of capital. Once monopoly capitalism dominates within national boundaries, it inevitably extends its reach beyond them. The monopolies, driven by the need for profit and control of markets, divide the globe among themselves. In this process, the freedom of competition between nations gives way to the planned competition of empires.

Lenin described this stage as *a division of the world not in theory, but in fact*. It does not occur through formal treaties alone, but through the economic domination of entire regions by the great capitalist combines. The world becomes a network of dependencies, each part controlled by one or another imperialist power. In his time, this division was carried out by the European colonial powers and the rising United States. In our time, it is the United States that presides over the most complete and far-reaching division of the world in history.

The mechanism of this domination has changed in form but not in essence. In Lenin's day, it took the shape of colonialism — direct territorial control by imperial states. Today, under the rule of U.S. monopoly capital, it takes the form of *economic and institutional empire*. The old colonial chains have been replaced by financial contracts, trade agreements, military alliances, and debt obligations. The colonies have become “partners,” but their subordination remains as absolute as before.

The global monopolies of our era — the oil conglomerates, agribusiness giants, technology corporations, and banks — have partitioned the planet's resources, labour, and markets. Each region of the world serves a particular function in the chain of imperial production. The Global South supplies raw materials and cheap labour; the industrialized periphery provides assembly and manufacturing; the imperial centre — led by the United States — commands finance, technology, and military force. This is the modern imperialist division of labour, planned not by governments but by corporate boards and investment funds.

The U.S. monopolies have organized this system through both economic and political instruments. The institutions of so-called “global governance” — the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization — function as organs of financial supervision. They dictate the policies of indebted nations, ensuring that their economies remain open to foreign capital, their public assets privatized, and their labour cheap. In this way, the division of the world is maintained not through direct occupation but through economic compulsion.

Militarily, the same logic prevails. The United States maintains hundreds of bases across the globe, ensuring that no region can escape its reach. The military-industrial complex — itself a fusion of state and monopoly capital — enforces the global order created by finance. Wars, interventions, and sanctions are not random acts of aggression but deliberate acts of redivision. When one monopoly loses ground, another seeks to reclaim it by force. Lenin

warned that imperialism “inevitably engenders wars,” for the monopolies, having divided the world once, must continually redivide it as their relative strength changes.

This global division is visible not only in geography but in technology and information. The great monopolies of communication — American technology corporations like Google, Apple, Meta, and Microsoft — control the digital infrastructure of the entire planet. They determine how information is produced, circulated, and stored. The internet, which appears as a universal field of human connection, is in reality an instrument of imperial control. Data becomes a new form of raw material, extracted from the populations of the world and monetized by American capital. The digital realm is the latest territory in the imperialist division of the globe.

Even the global food supply is partitioned in this way. A few agribusiness monopolies — Cargill, Monsanto (Bayer), Archer Daniels Midland — control the production and distribution of seeds, fertilizers, and grain. Nations that once fed themselves now depend on imports priced in dollars. The hunger of the poor thus becomes another guarantee of profit for the monopolies. In this manner, every necessity of life — food, energy, medicine, and information — becomes an instrument of imperial domination.

Within this system, smaller capitalist nations occupy subordinate positions. They are integrated into the structure of global monopoly capital as suppliers, markets, or financial satellites. Their own bourgeoisies become junior partners of U.S. capital, profiting from exploitation abroad while submitting to domination at home. The result is what Lenin foresaw: *a world completely divided among a few powerful states and their monopolies, leaving no territory unclaimed, no market unpenetrated.*

But the division of the world among monopolies also generates new contradictions. The struggle for redivision — for access to resources, markets, and labour — continually destabilizes the system. The imperialist powers, though united against the working class, are in perpetual conflict with one another. Their competition produces trade wars, political crises, and military confrontations. What appears as “geopolitics” is, in truth, the struggle of monopolies for world domination.

The United States, as the leading imperialist power, sits at the centre of this web of contradictions. Its corporations dominate the global economy, but its supremacy depends on constant expansion and control. Every challenge to its economic rule — whether from rival powers or from independent movements — threatens the structure of imperialism itself. Hence the continuous wars, interventions, and sanctions that characterize U.S. foreign policy. Behind every call for “freedom” or “security” stands the real demand of finance capital: maintain the division of the world as it stands.

Yet Lenin’s thought teaches that this order, like every class system, contains the seeds of its own destruction. The monopolies that divide the world also unite it economically, binding all nations into a single system of production. The workers of the world, though separated by borders, are joined by common exploitation. The same forces that sustain imperialism — the

concentration of capital, the export of capital, and the global integration of labour — also create the material conditions for its overthrow.

Thus, the division of the world among monopolies marks both the peak and the approaching decline of capitalism. It reveals a system that can organize the entire planet's production yet cannot serve humanity's needs; that unifies the world economically but divides it politically; that creates abundance while perpetuating poverty. The monopolies have conquered the earth, but in doing so, they have prepared the ground for their own expropriation.

The world, having been divided by the few, will one day be reclaimed by the many. When the means of production pass from private to collective ownership, the artificial divisions of imperialism will dissolve, and humanity will organize its wealth not for profit but for life.

Lenin identified the fifth defining feature of imperialism as *the territorial division of the world among the great powers*. This represents the political culmination of all the economic processes previously described — the concentration of production and capital, the fusion of finance and industry, and the export of capital abroad. Once capital extends its reach across the entire planet, the great capitalist states confront one another not as traders but as conquerors, competing for domination over territories, resources, and peoples. The world becomes a chessboard of imperialist rivalry, carved into spheres of influence according to the interests of the ruling monopolies.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, this division took the form of colonial empires — Britain in India and Africa, France in Indochina, Germany and Belgium in Africa, and the United States in Latin America and the Pacific. By Lenin's time, the world had been completely partitioned among the major powers; there were no longer any "unclaimed" territories to exploit. Henceforth, imperialist expansion could occur only through redivision — the seizure of existing colonies or markets from rival powers. This permanent struggle for redivision, Lenin explained, was the root cause of imperialist wars.

In the modern epoch, the old colonial system has transformed into *neo-imperialism* — the same division of the world, now enforced through finance, military alliances, and global institutions rather than direct occupation. The flag may have changed, but the chain remains. The United States, emerging from the Second World War as the dominant imperialist power, reorganized this division under its own leadership. The empires of Europe collapsed into dependency, and the world was redrawn around a single imperial centre: American finance capital.

The U.S. imperial system is not defined by formal colonies but by a global hierarchy of dependence. Nations are divided into three layers: the imperial core, the subordinate capitalist allies, and the exploited periphery. The core consists of the United States and its closest partners — Western Europe, Japan, Canada, and Australia — bound together by shared monopoly interests. These states form a collective imperial bloc that commands the world's wealth, technology, and military power. Beneath them lie the semi-dependent states — suppliers of raw materials and cheap labour, whose economies are integrated into global production chains controlled by Western capital. At the bottom lies the oppressed world —

the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America — whose natural wealth and labour serve as the foundation of the imperial system.

This structure is maintained by a combination of economic domination and military force. Economically, the monopolies of the imperial core extract surplus value through investment, trade, and debt. Militarily, the United States ensures compliance through its global network of bases, alliances, and interventions. NATO, the IMF, the World Bank, and the dollar system function together as instruments of the same rule. Every war waged by the United States since 1945 — whether in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, or elsewhere — has been an act of imperial redivision: the defense or expansion of markets, resources, and influence against rival powers or independent movements.

Lenin wrote that the essence of imperialism is the *striving for domination, not freedom*. The modern United States expresses this tendency in its purest form. It claims to defend “democracy” and “human rights,” yet everywhere it enforces the rights of capital — the right to invest, to extract, to profit. The slogans of liberty serve as the ideological veil for conquest. The division of the world is justified as the defense of civilization, just as the empires of old justified theirs in the name of progress and religion.

The new form of redivision in our time is economic warfare — sanctions, embargoes, and trade manipulation. The United States no longer needs to occupy territory to control it; it can strangle entire nations through the mechanisms of global finance. The dollar’s role as world currency allows it to dictate the terms of trade, punish defiance, and reward submission. This financial supremacy is the modern equivalent of colonial tribute. Through debt and dependence, entire states are reduced to vassals of American capital.

But as Lenin foresaw, the division of the world cannot remain static. The rise of new capitalist powers — China, Russia, India, and others — has brought renewed competition for influence. The planet is once again in a phase of redivision. Trade wars, proxy conflicts, and military confrontations reflect the struggle between rival capitalist blocs for control of resources, markets, and technology. The world crisis of imperialism, which began with the first world war, continues in new and more complex forms. The fundamental cause remains unchanged: the inability of the capitalist system to develop without expansion and conquest.

Within this imperialist hierarchy, the United States holds the commanding position, but also the most precarious. Its dominance depends on maintaining global financial control, military superiority, and ideological authority. Yet each of these pillars is eroding. The overextension of military power, the instability of the dollar, and the rising resistance of oppressed nations expose the limits of imperial rule. What Lenin wrote of the British Empire in his time applies now to the American: “It has become an overripe fruit, ready to rot.”

The division of the world among imperialist powers is therefore not a sign of stability but of impending crisis. The contradictions between the monopolies, between imperialist blocs, and between the exploiters and the exploited, intensify with every decade. Imperialism has unified the globe economically, but at the cost of perpetual conflict. It has created a world

system that binds all nations together, yet leaves the majority enslaved to the interests of the few.

For Lenin, the solution lay not in reforming imperialism but in overthrowing it. He taught that “imperialist wars can only be ended by the revolutionary overthrow of the bourgeoisie.” The division of the world among powers cannot be undone by diplomacy or peace treaties, for its root lies in the private ownership of capital. Only when the means of production are socialized — when capital itself ceases to rule — can the earth be organized according to human need rather than profit.

The United States today stands as the central organizer of this divided world. Its corporations, banks, and military alliances constitute the framework of global imperialism. Yet within its very strength lies its weakness. Every act of domination generates resistance; every conquest sows rebellion. As in Lenin’s time, the contradictions of imperialism are preparing the conditions for a new epoch — one in which the workers and oppressed peoples of all nations will reclaim the earth from the monopolies that have divided it, and unite it under the conscious organization of collective humanity.

The United States, as the central imperialist power of the modern epoch, tries to dominate through two interconnected instruments: *military* and *financial hegemony*. These constitute the twin pillars of contemporary imperialism — the sword and the coin — by which the American bourgeoisie enforces its rule over the global order. Yet as Lenin’s analysis of imperialism makes clear, every empire, by overreaching itself, generates its own opposition. The present challenge to U.S. hegemony, embodied in the emerging alliance of the BRICS nations, reveals the growing cracks in the imperial structure of finance and force.

From Lenin’s standpoint, the military apparatus of an imperialist power is not merely for defense; it is the armed extension of monopoly capital. The state, as the organized force of the bourgeoisie, wields its army to secure markets, protect investments, and suppress resistance. In the case of the United States, this principle is raised to a global scale. With over 750 military bases across more than 80 countries, the U.S. has transformed the entire planet into a network of armed outposts protecting the interests of American finance capital.

These bases are not scattered arbitrarily. Each corresponds to a strategic region of economic and geopolitical importance — the oil fields of the Middle East, the trade routes of the Pacific, the raw materials of Africa, and the financial centres of Europe and Asia. They function as garrisons of monopoly power, ensuring that no region escapes the reach of American capital. The wars, interventions, and “security partnerships” that the U.S. pursues are not acts of national defense but acts of economic enforcement. Behind every military base lies an oil contract, a trade route, or a debt obligation.

Lenin would have recognized this structure as the armed phase of imperialist domination. He wrote that the export of capital must be “protected” by political and military means, for it

cannot exist without the guarantee of force. The United States today fulfills that law to its extreme. Its army, navy, and air force serve as the global police of monopoly capital, ensuring that the flow of profit and resources continues unimpeded. The Pentagon is the armed wing of Wall Street.

Parallel to this military domination stands *financial control*, the second pillar of U.S. imperial power. The dollar serves as the world's primary reserve currency — the measure of value for global trade and the vehicle of international debt. Through institutions such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, American finance capital dictates the economic policy of dependent nations. Loans are issued with conditions that enforce privatization, austerity, and the opening of markets to foreign ownership. These mechanisms, described by Lenin as the *financial strangulation* of weaker nations, represent the modern form of colonial tribute.

The power of the dollar allows the U.S. to extract real wealth from the rest of the world without direct exchange. Nations must accumulate dollars to trade, invest, or pay debts; the United States creates these dollars at will. It imports goods from abroad and pays with paper or digital symbols that the rest of the world must accept. This system, sustained by faith and coercion, turns the entire global economy into a tributary of American finance.

However, the contradictions of this imperial structure are now becoming visible. The very success of U.S. hegemony has produced its own negation: the rise of alternative centres of capitalist power. The formation of the BRICS bloc — Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa — represents the first coherent challenge to the unipolar order established after the fall of the Soviet Union. Though these nations themselves remain within the framework of capitalism, their collective growth signals a shift in the balance of power within the imperialist hierarchy.

The BRICS countries control a significant portion of global production, trade, and resources. China has emerged as the world's industrial core; Russia commands vast energy and raw material reserves; India and Brazil represent enormous markets and productive capacities; South Africa serves as a continental gateway to Africa. Together, they have begun to develop alternative institutions of finance and trade — the New Development Bank, alternative payment systems, and agreements for trade in national currencies — all of which undermine the monopoly of the dollar and the IMF.

Lenin's analysis helps to interpret this development not as the birth of a new world of equality, but as the *beginning of a redivision of the world among competing imperialist blocs*. The U.S.-led system of finance capital faces a rival coalition of capitals seeking a larger share of global wealth and influence. The emergence of the BRICS is both a symptom of imperialism's decay and a step toward its transformation. The competition between U.S. and BRICS power blocs marks the deepening crisis of the imperialist order as a whole.

Nevertheless, this opposition has progressive potential to the extent that it weakens U.S. domination and opens space for the independent development of oppressed nations. The struggle against the unipolar system undermines the financial dictatorship of the dollar,

challenges military aggression, and exposes the hypocrisy of “Western democracy.” Yet, from a Marxist-Leninist standpoint, one must not mistake inter-capitalist rivalry for liberation. The BRICS nations, too, operate on capitalist foundations; their ruling classes seek not to abolish exploitation but to manage it under their own terms. The real struggle for liberation lies not between blocs of capital, but between capital and labour on a global scale.

The world thus stands at a turning point foreseen by Lenin: the era when the contradictions of imperialism become universal. The United States, through its system of military bases and financial supremacy, attempts to preserve an order that can no longer sustain itself. The BRICS alliance, while challenging that dominance, reflects the emergence of new centres of monopoly power. Between them lies the decisive question of our epoch — whether humanity will remain divided among competing empires, or move beyond imperialism altogether through the international revolution of the working class.

The lesson of Lenin remains clear: no empire, however powerful, can rule the world forever. The combination of military coercion and financial control may delay collapse, but it cannot abolish contradiction. The same process that gave the United States global power — the concentration of capital — will ultimately generate the global forces that destroy it. The growing unity of oppressed nations, the rebellion of workers everywhere, and the breakdown of dollar supremacy point toward a new stage of history: the end of imperialism and the birth of a truly socialist world order.

The United States still imagines itself the ruler of the world, but in truth its supremacy has passed. The age of uncontested U.S. hegemony — political, military, and financial — has ended. What remains is not genuine dominance, but the desperate attempt of a declining capitalist power to maintain influence through ideology, manipulation, and intimidation. The United States no longer commands the material strength to rule; it relies instead on the weapon of illusion — the claim that its system and its values are universal and eternal.

Lenin’s thought helps to clarify this stage of imperialism’s decay. When an imperial power can no longer lead by production, it seeks to lead by force; when it can no longer lead by force, it seeks to lead by myth. The United States has entered precisely this phase. Its factories are hollowed out, its infrastructure decaying, its financial system sustained only by speculation and debt. It has not the productive might that once gave it real power. Yet it continues to preach its “leadership of the free world,” disguising weakness as moral authority.

The network of U.S. military bases — more than 700 scattered across the globe — no longer expresses actual superiority, but anxiety. They are remnants of an empire trying to preserve an order that no longer corresponds to reality. These outposts consume enormous resources but produce no victory. The wars of the last decades — Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya — have demonstrated not strength but exhaustion. The U.S. military machine, designed to frighten the weak, has proven incapable of defeating determined nations that resist imperial control. Its bases now serve less as instruments of conquest than as monuments to past domination.

Meanwhile, the balance of world power has shifted decisively toward the rising bloc of BRICS nations. Together, these countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa — now represent a greater share of global production, trade, and population than the entire capitalist West. Their economic capacity, industrial development, and resource base far exceed that of the United States, whose strength lies chiefly in the sphere of finance and propaganda. The BRICS nations possess the material foundation of a new global order: productive labour, technological capacity, and sovereign control over vital resources.

Militarily, too, the illusion of U.S. supremacy has been shattered. Russia and China possess modernized, independent military systems capable of defending vast territories and challenging Western aggression. Their combined power far outweighs that of the United States and its declining allies. The attempt by the U.S. to encircle these nations through military alliances — NATO in Europe, AUKUS in the Pacific — exposes its fear, not its confidence. It seeks to contain what it cannot defeat. The era of a single imperial power enforcing its will on the world has ended; what remains is a crumbling empire surrounded by stronger, more disciplined states.

Financially, the same decline is evident. The dollar still functions as a global currency, but its dominance is eroding. The BRICS nations have begun to trade in their own currencies, establish alternative financial institutions, and develop systems of payment independent of the U.S.-controlled networks. The New Development Bank and similar mechanisms represent not mere reform but rebellion against the rule of the dollar. The old imperial system of debt and dependence — the IMF, World Bank, and Wall Street nexus — is losing its grip.

The United States continues to project its power through ideology: through the export of “democracy,” “human rights,” and “free markets.” But this is only the ideological veil of finance capital. It no longer convinces even its allies, who recognize that these words conceal economic coercion and political interference. The world has learned that “American democracy” means submission to U.S. investment, and “human rights” mean obedience to U.S. interests. The ideological apparatus of imperialism — the media, think tanks, and cultural industry — now functions as a substitute for power that no longer exists.

Lenin would recognize this condition as the final stage of imperialist decay — the stage at which an empire maintains its form after it has lost its substance. The United States still possesses the appearance of global power, but its material foundation has eroded. It no longer commands the world through production or force, but through spectacle and debt. Its military bases and financial institutions remain, but they cannot halt the movement of history. The centre of gravity has shifted east and south — toward the nations that actually produce, build, and organize the material life of humanity.

The BRICS nations, by contrast, express the tendency of history toward multipolarity and independence. Though they remain within the framework of capitalism, they represent the end of Western monopoly over the world’s economy and politics. Their cooperation weakens the instruments of U.S. domination and opens new possibilities for the developing world to pursue sovereign paths. They have begun to build the material basis for a post-imperialist order — one in which no single state dictates the destiny of others.

Thus, the real condition of the present world is not U.S. supremacy, but U.S. desperation. Its military machine is stretched, its financial empire indebted, its ideological authority exhausted. The attempt to dominate through bases and dollars persists, but its power is hollow — a structure of coercion without consent. The new epoch belongs to those who control production, not speculation; sovereignty, not subservience; development, not plunder.

The United States can still threaten, sanction, and manipulate, but it can no longer command. Its capitalist ideology, militarily and financially enforced, meets resistance everywhere — in the factories of China, the fields of Brazil, the energy networks of Russia, and the consciousness of peoples long exploited. The balance of world power has turned. The imperial centre has become the periphery, and the periphery has become the centre of creation.

Lenin's prophecy is fulfilled in this transformation. Imperialism, as the highest stage of capitalism, carries within itself the seeds of its end. The U.S. attempt to dominate the world through violence and finance marks not the triumph of capitalism, but its exhaustion. The real power of our age lies not in Wall Street or the Pentagon, but in the united strength of nations that refuse to kneel — and in the awakening of the world's workers, who will one day abolish the imperial system altogether.

Wars for Resources and the Military-Industrial Complex

From the standpoint of Marx, Engels, and Lenin, war under capitalism is never an accident, nor the result of mere misunderstanding, ideology, or personal ambition. War is the continuation of profit by other means — the violent expression of the economic contradictions of the capitalist system. Behind every war stands the struggle of monopoly capital for markets, resources, and spheres of influence. The battlefield is the global marketplace turned to fire and steel.

Marx revealed that in every epoch, the ruling class conducts war for material gain. The bourgeoisie, having conquered internal markets, must expand outward to survive. When peaceful competition no longer yields sufficient profits, it resorts to violence. Engels described war as “part of the business of the bourgeoisie,” a means by which the capitalist state enforces the interests of its ruling class abroad. Lenin brought this thought to its highest clarity: in the era of imperialism, wars are inevitable because the world has already been divided among monopolies, and further profit can be achieved only through redivision.

In the imperialist age, war becomes an instrument of financial and industrial policy. Armies move when capital demands new fields of accumulation — for oil, minerals, trade routes, or markets. Every modern conflict is, at its core, an economic event disguised in political or moral language. When the bourgeoisie speaks of “defense,” it means the defense of property; when it speaks of “freedom,” it means freedom of investment; when it speaks of “security,” it means the security of profit.

The United States, as the declining centre of capitalism, exemplifies this reality. Its economy has become dependent on permanent militarization. The so-called “defense” industry — the system of corporations producing weapons, aircraft, surveillance technology, and logistics — is the most profitable sector of American capitalism. This *military-industrial complex* functions as the direct material link between the state and monopoly capital. It ensures the constant conversion of public wealth into private profit through war and preparation for war.

Marxists understand this not as a distortion of capitalism, but as its logical development. When overproduction and falling profit rates threaten the stability of the system, destruction through war restores temporary balance. The production of weapons, though economically wasteful, becomes socially necessary to capitalism’s survival. The state finances the arms industry through debt, the military consumes the products, and the destruction of capital abroad creates new demand for reconstruction and control. War thus functions as capitalism’s cruel form of renewal — a periodic burning of the world to keep accumulation alive.

The wars of the United States over the past century confirm this pattern perfectly. Every major intervention — Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, Libya, Syria — was presented as a moral crusade but served the interests of monopoly capital. In each case, war opened new territories for investment, secured access to resources, and maintained the global role of the dollar. When domestic crises of overproduction or unemployment appeared, the state turned to militarism as the solution. War contracts absorbed surplus capital, mobilized the economy, and suppressed class struggle at home. The flag replaced the strike; nationalism replaced solidarity.

Lenin called this fusion of state, military, and capital *the politics of imperial decay*. When capitalism reaches its monopolist stage, it loses the ability to expand peacefully. The contradictions between rival monopolies — for oil, raw materials, labour, and markets — lead inexorably to military confrontation. The capitalist state, serving its financial masters, uses war to destroy competitors and redivide the world. The modern war is therefore not a conflict between nations, but between rival capitalist blocs. The working class in each country fights, bleeds, and dies for the profits of its bourgeoisie.

Under the present conditions, U.S. imperialism wages not only open wars but economic and proxy wars. Sanctions, blockades, and regime changes serve the same purpose as bombs: to subjugate nations that resist capitalist penetration. The U.S. military-industrial complex requires constant enemies to justify its existence and maintain production. When no external threat exists, it is invented. The ideology of “national security” becomes a permanent justification for the transfer of wealth from the people to the monopolies of war.

At the same time, new centres of power — the BRICS nations and other independent states — challenge this system of militarized capitalism. Their resistance limits the capacity of U.S. capital to dominate the world’s resources. In response, the United States increases its aggression, seeking to reassert control through military presence and alliances. Yet each new conflict further exposes its weakness. Its wars no longer bring victory but only destruction and debt. The empire of profit has reached the stage where war devours the very society that sustains it.

Marxists see in this process not only tragedy but the unfolding of historical necessity. The contradiction between socialized production and private appropriation, which drives capitalism to war, also prepares its end. The same technologies that produce weapons can produce abundance; the same workers who build bombs can build a new world once freed from the rule of profit. War reveals to the proletariat the true nature of the bourgeois state — that it serves not humanity, but capital.

Thus, for Marxists, the abolition of war requires the abolition of the capitalist system itself. So long as profit governs production, the world will be condemned to periodic destruction. Peace cannot exist where capital rules, because the needs of accumulation will always outweigh the needs of life. Only a socialist world, where the means of production belong to humanity as a whole, can transform the destructive energy of war into the creative energy of cooperation.

In the epoch we now enter, the wars of capitalism are the convulsions of its death. Each conflict reveals more clearly that profit and peace are incompatible. The military-industrial complex — once the engine of imperial power — has become the parasite that drains the life of its host. When the workers of the world refuse to fight for their exploiters, when they turn the weapons of oppression into tools of liberation, the age of war for profit will end, and the age of human solidarity will begin.

Lenin revealed that imperialist war is not a result of the ambitions of individual rulers or accidental conflicts between nations. It is the inevitable outcome of capitalism at its highest stage — the rivalry of great monopolies and finance capital for the redivision of the world. When all territories, resources, and markets have already been divided among a few powerful states, further expansion can only occur through conflict among those same powers. War, in Lenin's words, is the violent continuation of the struggle of capital for the repartition of the globe.

In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin demonstrated that the capitalist system contains within itself the constant pressure to expand. Each monopoly, each national bloc of finance capital, seeks new sources of raw materials, cheaper labour, and profitable investment opportunities. But because the earth is finite, these interests collide. Peaceful competition transforms into armed struggle. The world market becomes a battlefield, and war becomes the instrument of redivision — the means by which one group of monopolies seizes the possessions and privileges of another.

Lenin's analysis of the First World War remains the classic example of this principle. The war was not fought for national defense or democracy, as the bourgeoisie claimed, but for the division of colonies, trade routes, and spheres of investment. Britain and France sought to maintain their vast empires; Germany, a later-developing capitalist power, sought to redivide the world in its favour. Each side mobilized millions of workers to die for interests that were not their own. The trenches of Europe were dug by capital itself, and the shells that filled them were the final arguments of competing monopolies.

This law of imperialist rivalry did not end with the early twentieth century. It continues in new and more complex forms. In our time, the world is again fully divided — not by colonial borders, but by financial and technological dominance. The United States, representing the decaying centre of Western monopoly capital, seeks to preserve its privileges against emerging powers — particularly the nations of the BRICS bloc. The conflicts of the twenty-first century — trade wars, sanctions, proxy conflicts, and interventions — are expressions of the same process Lenin identified more than a century ago: the struggle of capitalist powers to redive the already divided world.

The United States wages its wars under the banner of “freedom” and “security,” yet their true purpose is to maintain access to energy, raw materials, markets, and financial control. The interventions in Iraq, Libya, and other regions were not driven by defense of democracy but by the need to control oil, currency systems, and trade routes. When rival nations — such as Russia or China — develop independent financial or technological systems, U.S. capital responds with aggression. In Lenin’s terms, these are *wars for redivision*: the attempt of one imperial bloc to restore its supremacy at the expense of another.

Lenin emphasized that such wars are inevitable under imperialism because competition between monopolies cannot be resolved by negotiation or reform. Each power must expand or perish. In the earlier stages of capitalism, crises could be temporarily relieved through the conquest of new territories. But once the globe is completely partitioned, the only means of expansion is to seize what another already possesses. This is why, in Lenin’s words, *imperialism means war*.

Today, this rivalry extends into every domain: economic, technological, and ideological. The struggle for control of energy pipelines, semiconductor production, rare earth minerals, and digital infrastructure reproduces the same pattern of conflict that once surrounded colonies and trade routes. The weapons are more advanced, but the motives are unchanged. Every trade blockade, every proxy war, every sanctions regime expresses the competition of capitalist states for domination of the global system.

Lenin also explained that imperialist wars expose the falsehood of bourgeois democracy. The same capitalist class that proclaims liberty and peace in peacetime becomes a warmonger when profit demands it. The parliamentary debates, the press, and the slogans of patriotism all serve to mask the class character of war. The working class is told it is fighting for its nation, while in truth it is dying for its masters. “Workers of one nation are set against workers of another,” Lenin wrote, “for the profits of their bourgeoisie.” The proletariat is thus turned into both the victim and the instrument of imperialist rivalry.

In the modern epoch, this pattern has reached global dimensions. The great blocs of capital — U.S.-led Western finance on one side, and the emerging powers of Eurasia and the Global South on the other — are engaged in a worldwide struggle for economic supremacy. The United States attempts to sustain its decaying order through military presence and financial pressure, while the BRICS nations seek to assert their sovereignty and share of world resources. This confrontation is not yet an open world war, but it expresses the same

contradiction that produced past imperialist conflicts: the need of capital to expand in a world that can no longer expand peacefully.

Lenin's analysis thus exposes the inner mechanism of modern geopolitics. Behind every alliance, every arms race, every diplomatic crisis lies the economic rivalry of capital. When he wrote that "politics is concentrated economics," he meant that the foreign policy of every capitalist state reflects the needs of its ruling class. War is not the breakdown of diplomacy; it is its continuation by violent means when economic competition reaches its limits.

This understanding also defines the revolutionary position toward war. For Lenin, the task of the proletariat is not to choose between rival imperialisms, but to oppose the entire system that produces them. Workers have no fatherland in a world divided by capital. Their enemy is not the worker of another nation, but the capitalist of their own. Only through international solidarity can the working class transform an imperialist war into a struggle for social revolution.

In this sense, Lenin's analysis remains the key to interpreting the present world. The wars of our century — whether military or financial — are not separate events, but chapters in the ongoing rivalry of capital for control of the planet's resources and labour. Each new conflict is another symptom of a system that has reached its limits. The final redivision of the world cannot come through another imperialist victory, but only through the end of imperialism itself — the abolition of private capital and the creation of a world organized for collective human need.

When that day comes, war will cease not because humanity has become more moral, but because the material basis of war — the competition of capital — will have disappeared. Until then, every explosion on the horizon reminds us of Lenin's truth: imperialism carries war in its womb, and only the death of imperialism will give birth to peace.

Crisis of the System: Debt, Inflation, and Class Polarization

Marx, Engels, and Lenin each revealed that the crises of capitalism are not accidental disturbances but necessary products of its inner structure. The capitalist mode of production, built on private ownership of socially organized labour, carries within it the seeds of its own breakdown. Every crisis expresses the same contradiction: the capacity of humanity to produce wealth far exceeds the ability of the capitalist system to distribute it. The result is overproduction amid want, abundance amid poverty — a world of stagnation, debt, and speculative madness.

Marx described this contradiction in *Capital*: the worker produces more than he can consume, and the capitalist can sell only what others can afford to buy. The productive forces, continually expanded by competition, surpass the limits of profitable exchange. Commodities pile up unsold, factories stand idle, and workers are thrown into unemployment. This is not a crisis of scarcity, but of excess — too much wealth for a system based on profit. Each new

technological advance deepens the contradiction, increasing productivity while reducing the share of labour in total income.

Engels explained that such crises arise not from natural causes, but from the anarchy of capitalist production. Every enterprise acts independently, producing for the market without coordination. The result is cyclical catastrophe — the periodic destruction of capital and labour to restore profitability. The crisis clears the ground for a new phase of accumulation, but at the cost of human misery. This rhythm of expansion and collapse is the heartbeat of capitalist history.

Lenin brought this analysis into the epoch of monopoly and finance capital. He showed that as competition gives way to monopoly, the crises of capitalism do not disappear but become deeper and more global. Monopolies attempt to stabilize profits through price control and financial manipulation, but they cannot abolish the fundamental contradiction between social production and private appropriation. When profits fall in the sphere of production, capital migrates into finance — speculation replaces industry, credit replaces real demand, and fictitious wealth multiplies while real production stagnates.

This process defines the contemporary United States and, by extension, the global capitalist system centred upon it. The productive base has been hollowed out, replaced by financial speculation, debt expansion, and artificial demand. The system sustains itself not by producing goods for use, but by inflating credit and prices. The worker, deprived of purchasing power, must borrow to live; the capitalist, deprived of markets, must speculate to profit. Thus, the circulation of debt replaces the circulation of commodities.

The productive capacity of modern industry far exceeds the needs of the market. Factories can produce far more cars, houses, and goods than can be sold profitably. Yet production cannot be expanded for social need because profit, not human necessity, governs investment. The result is chronic underutilization of capacity — vast potential lying idle while millions remain unemployed or underpaid. The so-called “boom” of technology and consumption in the United States conceals a stagnating real economy, dependent on speculation and state subsidies.

As Lenin foresaw, the dominance of finance capital transforms the nature of crisis. The creation of “fictitious capital” — stocks, bonds, derivatives, and digital currencies — becomes the main field of accumulation. Wealth appears to grow endlessly through rising asset prices, even while real production stagnates. But this illusion rests on a foundation of debt. Each financial boom is a pyramid of claims on future labour that cannot be realized. When the speculative bubble bursts, the working class pays the price through unemployment, inflation, and austerity.

This is the essence of the present global order: the hypertrophy of finance as the parasite feeding upon production. The U.S. economy has become the model of this parasitism. Its profits depend not on the creation of new value but on the manipulation of money and credit. The banks, hedge funds, and corporations extract surplus through speculation, mergers, and

debt instruments — all forms of wealth without labour. The nation that once symbolized industrial progress now represents capitalism in its most decayed and predatory form.

To maintain the illusion of growth, the capitalist state creates money to sustain consumption and inflate asset values. The result is a system of perpetual indebtedness — workers, firms, and the state itself living on borrowed time. The United States owes trillions, yet continues to issue debt because the rest of the world, trapped in the dollar system, must accept it. Inflation is the inevitable outcome: prices rise not from real prosperity, but from the artificial expansion of money and credit. For the worker, wages lag behind costs; for the capitalist, debts are devalued; for the system as a whole, the crisis is postponed but not resolved.

This inflationary cycle is not the sign of strength but of weakness. It reveals a system that can survive only through continuous deception — the creation of fictitious value to conceal the stagnation of real value. Every attempt to suppress crisis through credit merely reproduces it on a larger scale. As Marx wrote, “The credit system becomes the most powerful lever of overproduction and over-speculation.” What the bourgeoisie calls financial innovation is in truth the organized postponement of collapse.

These contradictions intensify the division between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The concentration of wealth in the hands of the few reaches obscene proportions. A tiny minority owns nearly all productive assets, while the majority struggle with insecurity and debt. Inflation, unemployment, and the decline of real wages transfer the burden of crisis from capital to labour. The capitalist class profits even in collapse, using state bailouts and speculation to accumulate more wealth. The working class bears the cost through austerity and despair.

The middle layers of society, once a stabilizing force, are crushed between falling incomes and rising prices. The illusion of “equal opportunity” vanishes as wealth and power concentrate. What remains is a polarized society: a small class of global rentiers and a vast mass of wage earners and indebted citizens. Lenin described this process as the parasitism and decay of capitalism — the stage where the ruling class lives by manipulating money while production and culture stagnate.

Because imperialism has bound all nations into one economic system, the crisis of the United States extends to the world. The export of capital, which once relieved internal contradictions, now spreads them globally. Inflation, debt, and speculation plague every country integrated into the dollar economy. The very mechanisms that once sustained U.S. dominance — the world financial system, the flow of cheap credit, the export of dollars — now transmit instability everywhere. The crisis of one imperial centre becomes the crisis of the entire capitalist world.

Marx foresaw that such contradictions would ultimately make capitalism ungovernable. The same forces that expand production beyond all limits also make private profit impossible without destruction. Each attempt to save the system deepens its decay. Engels predicted that the bourgeoisie, incapable of solving the contradictions it creates, would be “choked by its

own abundance.” Lenin saw in this process the material basis for revolution — the moment when the working class recognizes that the productive forces of humanity can no longer be contained within the narrow framework of private ownership.

Thus, the crisis of debt, inflation, and class polarization is not a passing disorder but the expression of a system approaching exhaustion. The age of speculative finance is the final form of capitalism — a stage where capital feeds upon itself, where profit is maintained only through destruction, and where the real productive power of humanity lies shackled by the chains of property.

When the worker begins to see that his poverty is not the result of chance but the necessary condition of capitalist wealth, the system’s ideological foundations will collapse. The contradiction between social wealth and private appropriation will then resolve itself not in reform, but in revolution — in the conscious organization of production for human need rather than for profit.

This is the historical meaning of the present crisis: not the end of the world, but the end of capitalism’s world — the transition from the anarchy of exploitation to the planned economy of the workers, from speculation to creation, from parasitic accumulation to human development.

At the highest stage of capitalism, the class structure hardens into two opposing poles: a parasitic bourgeoisie that lives off accumulated capital, and an impoverished proletariat that produces all value yet owns nothing. The former commands wealth without labour; the latter labours without reward. This opposition — already foreseen by Marx and Engels, and developed fully by Lenin — defines the modern imperialist world, with the United States as its clearest expression.

Marx explained that the bourgeoisie, in its revolutionary youth, once played a progressive role. By developing industry, science, and global trade, it liberated the productive forces from feudal stagnation. But once capitalism matured into monopoly and finance domination, the bourgeoisie ceased to create and began to live as parasite. Engels described this transformation as the decay of a class that “no longer produces but merely consumes the labour of others.” Lenin called it *the parasitism and decay of capitalism* — the phase in which the ruling class, detached from production, feeds upon the collective labour of society like a leech.

In the epoch of finance capital, this parasitic character becomes absolute. The modern bourgeoisie no longer directs factories or innovates technology; it controls capital through ownership, speculation, and debt. Its profits arise not from productive activity but from the circulation of money — from rent, interest, and manipulation of prices. The banker, the investor, the shareholder, and the corporate executive form the social type of this decayed class. They live not by labour, but by the command of property titles. They are the beneficiaries of a system that has transformed every human necessity into a source of profit.

The American bourgeoisie stands as the archetype of this parasitic order. Its wealth is concentrated in a handful of monopolies and financial institutions that dominate the world's economy. These oligarchs own no farms, mines, or workshops; they own the paper and digital claims to them. Their income flows from speculation, from the extraction of rent and interest, and from state contracts financed by public debt. The entire U.S. economy has become a machine for transferring value from the working population to this financial elite. The capitalist no longer produces wealth; he appropriates it through the mechanisms of credit and the state.

This parasitism is expressed in the very structure of American life. The ruling class multiplies wealth through the inflation of asset prices, while the working class is buried under the weight of debt. Housing, education, and healthcare — once social needs — have become instruments of extraction. The bourgeoisie profits from the worker's birth through medical debt, from his youth through student loans, and from his death through mortgage and credit. Every moment of his existence is commodified. This is the perfection of exploitation: the worker pays tribute to capital even when not at work.

Lenin emphasized that such a society cannot sustain moral or material balance. The accumulation of wealth by the few demands the impoverishment of the many. The parasitic bourgeoisie consumes without producing; the proletariat produces without consuming. The result is stagnation at the top and misery at the base. The living standards of workers decline even as the productivity of labour increases. Wages stagnate, social services collapse, and insecurity spreads, while the bourgeoisie expands its fortunes through speculation and state subsidies.

The parasitic character of the bourgeoisie is visible also in its political and cultural life. It has lost any connection to production, science, or creativity. Its thought is shallow, its politics corrupt, its culture decadent. It spends vast resources not on the advancement of humanity but on luxury, advertising, and control. Its universities train servants of finance; its media glorifies wealth while hiding its origins. The ruling class has become a caste of rentiers — socially useless yet politically dominant. Marx's words from the *Eighteenth Brumaire* resound today: "They cannot represent the future; they can only represent the rotting corpse of the past."

Opposite this decayed class stands the impoverished proletariat — the immense majority of humanity. This class creates all social wealth through labour, yet is denied the means of life. It toils in factories, offices, warehouses, fields, and digital networks, producing the commodities, data, and services that sustain modern civilization. But the more productive its work becomes, the less it gains. The worker's condition is defined by insecurity: low wages, debt, precarious employment, and dependence on the whims of capital.

In the United States, the richest imperial centre in history, this contradiction appears in its most grotesque form. The bourgeoisie builds fortunes measured in trillions, while millions live in poverty or homelessness. The worker's wage buys less each year; his labour time extends through multiple jobs; his future is mortgaged before it begins. The middle strata, once presented as proof of social mobility, are being drawn downward into the ranks of the

proletariat. Beneath the façade of prosperity lies a nation divided between idle wealth and exhausted labour.

Lenin saw this polarization as the hallmark of imperialism's decay. The export of capital abroad and the parasitic extraction of profits from the periphery allow the bourgeoisie of the imperial centre to buy social peace for a time. But as global contradictions sharpen and profits fall, even this privileged layer begins to erode. The crisis of the American working class — declining wages, decaying cities, and vanishing social protections — marks the point where imperialism turns inward, consuming its own foundation.

This polarization is not confined to the United States. Across the capitalist world, the same pattern prevails: a global bourgeoisie living from speculation and rent, and a global proletariat bound by debt and low wages. The worker in Detroit, the farmer in Brazil, the miner in Congo, and the technician in India are joined by a single chain — their labour sustains the wealth of a class that no longer labours. The bourgeoisie has become global; so too must the proletariat become conscious of its global unity.

Marx, Engels, and Lenin taught that such a division cannot endure indefinitely. When the ruling class ceases to perform any useful function, it loses its right to exist. The parasitic bourgeoisie, living off the decay of its own system, becomes a historical burden. The impoverished proletariat, on the other hand, represents not poverty but potential — the power to reorganize society on a new foundation. From the ruins of parasitic capitalism can arise a system based on collective ownership and planned production, where labour serves human need rather than private profit.

Thus, the polarization between parasitic bourgeoisie and impoverished proletariat is not merely a moral outrage; it is the central contradiction of our epoch. It signifies that capitalism has fulfilled its historical mission and exhausted its capacity for progress. The same class that once built the modern world now prevents its further development. The wealth of the parasites is the poverty of the producers. The liberation of the latter demands the expropriation of the former.

Only when the proletariat seizes the means of production and abolishes the rule of capital will the energies of humanity be freed from the grasp of parasitism. Then labour will no longer serve property, but property will serve labour; wealth will cease to be the privilege of the few and become the common inheritance of all. The age of the parasite will end, and the age of the producer — the conscious worker — will begin.

PART V. CONCLUSION: THE FUTURE OF AMERICA AND THE WORLD

The Inevitable Crisis of Capitalism

Marx demonstrated that capitalism carries within itself the very forces that will bring about its destruction. It is not overthrown by accident, conspiracy, or external invasion, but by the natural development of its own contradictions. Every stage of capitalist progress — every increase in productivity, every expansion of markets, every concentration of wealth — prepares the conditions for its eventual collapse. The system's triumph is also its tragedy, for the same forces that make it powerful make it unsustainable.

At the heart of Marx's analysis lies the contradiction between *social production* and *private appropriation*. Labour under capitalism is collective: millions of workers cooperate across factories, nations, and technologies to produce wealth. But the fruits of this collective labour are seized by private owners — the bourgeoisie — who appropriate surplus value as profit. The more society becomes organized in production, the more irrational private ownership appears. Humanity's work is social, but its results serve only a minority. This contradiction grows sharper as the system develops, until it reaches a breaking point.

The capitalist cannot expand production for its own sake; he produces only to realize profit. But profit arises from the exploitation of labour — from the difference between the value the worker creates and the wage he receives. Yet as technology advances, machines replace human labour, reducing the source of surplus value itself. The capitalist class, in seeking to increase productivity, undermines the very foundation of profit. The result is a permanent tendency toward overproduction, falling rates of return, and economic crisis.

Marx described this dynamic as *the law of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall*. As the organic composition of capital rises — that is, as dead labour (machines, raw materials, and technology) increases relative to living labour — the extraction of surplus value becomes more difficult. The capitalist attempts to compensate through greater exploitation, longer working hours, wage cuts, and the search for new markets. But these are temporary remedies. The contradiction cannot be resolved within the system; it can only be postponed by expansion, speculation, or war.

The United States, as the most advanced capitalist country, manifests this contradiction in its most developed form. Its productive capacity is enormous, yet much of it lies idle. Its corporations record vast profits, yet its people live in debt and insecurity. Its financial markets flourish, while its cities decay. This is the paradox Marx foresaw: a society drowning in abundance but incapable of feeding its own. The same technology that could liberate humanity becomes an instrument of poverty because it serves profit instead of need.

Lenin extended this analysis to the era of monopoly and imperialism. He showed that capitalism's contradictions do not disappear but are internationalized. When the internal market is saturated and profits decline, capital seeks salvation abroad — through the export

of investment, the division of the world, and the exploitation of weaker nations. Imperialism thus appears as a temporary escape from crisis, but it deepens the contradictions by binding the entire globe to the same system of exploitation. The crisis of one nation becomes the crisis of all.

Today, this tendency has reached its limit. The planet itself has been divided and exhausted. There are no new continents to conquer, no external markets to absorb overproduction. The expansion of debt and speculation can no longer conceal the stagnation of real production. The U.S. capitalist system, once able to export its crises outward, now faces them at home: collapsing infrastructure, inequality, political decay, and social despair. The imperial centre is turning into the site of its own disintegration.

Marx foresaw that the ultimate outcome of these contradictions would be not the automatic fall of capitalism, but the conscious revolt of the working class. The system does not collapse by itself; it is overthrown when the producers recognize their collective power and seize control of production. Crisis provides the material basis for this awakening. As life under capitalism becomes increasingly unbearable — as wages stagnate, costs rise, and insecurity spreads — the worker begins to see that his suffering is not personal misfortune but the necessary condition of the system's existence.

Engels explained that each economic crisis contains within it a political crisis — the breakdown of faith in the old order. When the bourgeoisie can no longer govern and the proletariat can no longer endure, revolution becomes not a dream but a necessity. Lenin confirmed this in the experience of the early twentieth century, when imperialist war transformed mass misery into revolutionary action. He showed that crisis alone is insufficient; it must be joined by organization, consciousness, and leadership to transform collapse into liberation.

The United States now stands before such a historical contradiction. Its productive forces are vast, but its social relations are obsolete. Its technology could provide abundance for all, but its profit system produces scarcity. Its workers are connected across industries and continents, yet remain alienated and fragmented by ideology. The contradiction between what *could be* and what *is* defines the crisis of modern capitalism. Every political struggle, every movement against inequality, every act of resistance expresses this deeper economic law: that private property has become a fetter upon human progress.

Marx wrote that no social order disappears before it has exhausted all possibilities of development, and that new relations arise only when the material conditions for them already exist. Those conditions are now fully mature. The productive capacity of humanity can no longer function within the limits of profit. The contradiction between use-value and exchange-value, between human need and capital's demand for accumulation, has reached its final stage. Either the system will perish through barbarism — war, ecological collapse, and social disintegration — or it will be transcended through conscious reorganization by the working class.

Thus, the crisis of capitalism is not merely economic; it is civilizational. The question is not whether the system will fall, but what will replace it. The bourgeoisie offers only decay, repression, and illusion. The proletariat holds the possibility of a new social order — socialism — in which production is planned for collective welfare, labour is liberated from exploitation, and humanity finally becomes master of its own conditions.

The inevitability of capitalism's crisis does not mean fatalism; it means opportunity. History has reached the point foreseen by Marx, Engels, and Lenin: the transformation of quantity into quality, of contradiction into revolution. The fall of the old world is not the end, but the beginning — the birth of a society founded not on profit but on purpose, not on competition but on cooperation, not on exploitation but on creation.

The collapse of capitalism is the opening of history's next chapter — the conscious reconstruction of life itself by the working class, the only truly universal class, whose liberation is the liberation of all humanity.

Lenin defined imperialism not as a new or separate system, but as the highest and final stage of capitalism — *moribund capitalism*. By this term he meant that imperialism represents capitalism in its state of decay, when the system has reached its maximum development and can no longer progress. The forces that once made it dynamic now render it parasitic; the same mechanisms that created its strength now produce its weakness. Imperialism, in Lenin's analysis, is capitalism that has outlived its historical purpose.

In the earlier period, capitalism played a revolutionary role. It swept away feudalism, liberated productive forces, unified markets, and advanced science and industry. But once production became socialized — organized through vast corporations, trusts, and banks — while ownership remained private, the system ceased to be progressive. The bourgeoisie no longer expanded production to meet human need, but to preserve its profit. Competition gave way to monopoly; innovation to speculation; creation to plunder. The energy that once built the modern world turned inward, feeding on its own substance.

Lenin observed that under monopoly capitalism, a small number of financial oligarchs command the entire economy. The free market that once fostered growth becomes an illusion; production is organized not for progress but for the enrichment of a few. The capitalist class no longer develops new productive forces — it manipulates the existing ones for financial gain. This is the meaning of *moribund capitalism*: a social order that continues to function, yet no longer grows in a genuinely productive sense. It survives through parasitism, militarism, and speculation.

In *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, Lenin identified several symptoms of this moribund condition. The concentration of capital leads to monopoly; the merging of bank and industrial capital creates finance capital; the export of capital replaces the export of goods; and the world is divided among monopolies and imperialist powers. These developments mark the exhaustion of capitalism's creative role. The system that once unified the world through production now divides it through exploitation. The bourgeoisie, having built the global economy, becomes incapable of managing it rationally.

Lenin wrote that imperialism is “parasitic or decaying capitalism.” Parasitic, because the ruling class lives increasingly from the labour of others — from rent, interest, and dividends rather than from productive activity. Decaying, because the drive for profit undermines the very foundations of production, leading to stagnation, crisis, and war. The imperialist powers no longer seek to develop new productive capacity; they seek to appropriate the fruits of others’ labour through financial domination and military force.

Nowhere is this clearer than in the United States. It represents the most advanced and therefore the most decayed form of capitalist organization. Its wealth is immense, but largely fictitious — based on paper assets, speculation, and debt. Its productive industry has been replaced by finance, its economy by militarism, its creativity by propaganda. The U.S. capitalist class lives from the tribute of the world, siphoned through the dollar system and the export of capital. It produces less, yet consumes more than any other nation. It is the perfect image of Lenin’s moribund capitalism: powerful outwardly, but inwardly hollow.

In such a stage, war becomes the normal condition of existence. Unable to expand peacefully, the imperialist powers turn to violence to preserve their dominance. The military-industrial complex, permanent armament, and constant conflict are not aberrations but necessities of decaying capitalism. Lenin understood that imperialism must continually destroy in order to live; war is its means of renewing the conditions of profit through destruction of capital and conquest of resources. But each war deepens decay, drains resources, and exposes the system’s futility.

Moribund capitalism also produces political and moral decline. The bourgeoisie, having lost its historical mission, degenerates into a class of speculators, rentiers, and corrupt politicians. It governs through deception and coercion, not through creative vision. Its ideology — democracy, freedom, progress — becomes a mask for exploitation. The institutions of the state become tools for maintaining privilege, while the masses are pacified with consumer illusions and media manipulation. Lenin saw in this degeneration not merely a political crisis, but a civilizational one: capitalism rots from within as its social contradictions intensify.

At the same time, imperialism creates the material and social conditions for its own overthrow. The very processes that make it moribund — the socialization of labour, the internationalization of production, and the concentration of capital — also prepare the basis for socialism. As the productive forces become too vast to be managed by private owners, the necessity of collective control becomes evident. As workers across the world are drawn into the same global system, their common interest in liberation becomes unmistakable. Imperialism, in destroying its own foundations, gives rise to the forces that will replace it.

Lenin emphasized that moribund capitalism does not fall automatically; it must be overthrown through conscious struggle. The decay of the system creates crisis, but not revolution by itself. Only when the proletariat becomes organized and aware of its historical role can the transformation occur. The collapse of imperialism opens two paths: barbarism or socialism. If the bourgeoisie maintains power, humanity faces endless war, poverty, and environmental ruin; if the working class seizes power, the productive forces can finally be directed toward human welfare.

Thus, for Lenin, the recognition that imperialism is moribund capitalism was not an expression of despair, but of revolutionary hope. It signified that capitalism had fulfilled its historical role and was now ready to be surpassed. The old order continues to decay, but its decomposition nourishes the new. Every crisis, every war, every collapse of markets is a symptom not of eternal capitalism, but of its approaching end.

The world of finance, debt, and imperial aggression we see today is not a sign of strength, but of exhaustion — the last convulsions of a system that can no longer justify its existence. As Lenin wrote, “Imperialism is the eve of the socialist revolution.” The moribund stage of capitalism marks not the triumph of capital, but its twilight. What appears as decline is in fact transition — the dying of the old world and the birth of the new.

When humanity finally organizes production according to collective need, when labour governs instead of capital, the long epoch of exploitation will close. The parasitic empire of finance and war will vanish, and with it the misery of class rule. The moribund system will give way to living socialism — the conscious self-organization of society, the realization of human freedom through labour, and the end of history’s long night of exploitation.

Toward the Workers’ Struggle

Marx revealed the material foundation of class struggle; Engels and Lenin showed the path by which that struggle becomes victorious. For both, the liberation of the working class is not a spontaneous act of revolt but a process of organization, education, and disciplined unity. Capitalism cannot be overcome by scattered resistance or moral protest; it can only be defeated by a conscious and organized class, acting as one collective will.

Engels wrote that the working class, through its daily struggle, learns the necessity of organization. He observed that capitalism itself creates the material basis for this organization by concentrating workers in large-scale industry, connecting them through communication, and teaching them cooperation through labour. The capitalist factory becomes the school of socialism: within its walls, the workers experience both their exploitation and their collective strength. Yet this spontaneous unity must be transformed into conscious unity. Organization gives shape to experience, turning the instinct of resistance into the strategy of revolution.

For Engels, discipline was not mechanical obedience, but the self-discipline of a class aware of its historical task. He saw that the workers, having been trained by capitalism to coordinate complex production, possessed the social capacity to organize society itself. The same collective discipline that keeps a factory running could, under socialism, be applied consciously and democratically to the management of all production. “The proletariat,” Engels wrote, “is compelled to organize itself as a class, and therefore as a political party.” Without such organization, the strength of the workers remains potential; with it, it becomes irresistible.

Lenin developed this principle into a science of revolutionary leadership. In his time, the spontaneous movements of workers — strikes, demonstrations, and uprisings — showed

immense energy but lacked direction. He warned that without organization and theory, the movement would remain at the level of trade-union struggle, seeking better conditions within capitalism instead of its abolition. “Without revolutionary theory,” Lenin wrote, “there can be no revolutionary movement.” Consciousness must be brought to the workers from their own experience, but guided by understanding of the system as a whole.

Lenin emphasized the need for a *vanguard party* — the organized expression of the most advanced section of the working class, united by theory, discipline, and commitment. This party does not substitute itself for the masses but serves as their organized memory and intelligence. It links daily struggle with the ultimate goal, turning scattered resistance into coordinated revolution. Just as capital organizes production to maintain domination, the proletariat must organize to overthrow it.

Discipline, for Lenin, was the living principle of revolutionary effectiveness. It did not mean blind submission but conscious unity in action. A class divided by indecision or faction cannot defeat a ruling class armed with wealth, media, and the state. Every successful revolution, Lenin showed, depends on the ability of the workers to act as a single force, guided by a common understanding and common purpose. “Iron discipline,” he wrote, “is born not of coercion but of conviction.” The proletarian organization must be democratic in discussion but united in action, combining the freedom of thought with the unity of will.

The necessity of such organization arises from the nature of capitalist power itself. The bourgeoisie is not simply a group of rich individuals; it is a class that rules through the state, the media, the schools, and the economy. Its control is systematic and global. To confront it, the working class must build its own system of power — its own institutions, culture, and discipline. Trade unions, cooperatives, parties, and revolutionary organizations form the structure through which the workers learn to govern themselves. Each strike, protest, and act of solidarity becomes a step toward political maturity.

In the United States and the capitalist world today, the working class has immense potential power but little organization. It is fragmented by industry, ideology, and national boundaries. The bourgeoisie has succeeded in dividing workers by race, nationality, and false individualism, replacing solidarity with competition. The task of the modern movement, therefore, is to reforge unity — to remind every worker that his struggle is not isolated but part of a universal conflict between labour and capital.

Revolutionary consciousness does not emerge overnight. It grows through the experience of struggle, through victories and defeats, through the recognition that reform cannot solve the fundamental contradictions of capitalism. Lenin taught that the first act of consciousness is the understanding that the worker’s fate cannot change without changing the system itself. The goal is not higher wages or shorter hours alone, but the end of exploitation — the abolition of wage labour and private property in the means of production.

Engels foresaw that when the working class understands its historical mission, it becomes “the gravedigger of capitalism.” Lenin proved that this transformation is not utopian but practical. When the proletariat organizes as a class for itself — that is, when it unites its

struggles under a single revolutionary program — it becomes capable of seizing power and reconstructing society on socialist foundations. The path to that goal lies not in spontaneity or reformism, but in the patient work of building revolutionary consciousness and discipline among the masses.

In the present epoch, the need for such organization is greater than ever. The contradictions of capitalism have reached a global scale, but so too has the working class. Workers across continents produce for the same monopolies, suffer under the same debt systems, and confront the same enemies. Their conditions differ in form but not in essence. The international character of production demands the international unity of labour. As Marx declared, and Lenin reaffirmed, “Workers of all countries must unite” — not as a slogan, but as the only road to survival and liberation.

The organization of the workers, therefore, is not merely a tactical question but the decisive question of history. The proletariat must learn to act as one class, guided by thought, discipline, and a clear understanding of its goal. Without organization, even the greatest courage is scattered; with it, even the smallest act can transform the world. The consciousness of this truth — that the workers hold the future in their collective hands — is the beginning of socialism.

When that consciousness becomes the practice of millions, when the discipline of the exploited surpasses the discipline of the exploiters, then the moribund system of capitalism will finally collapse under the weight of its own contradictions. Out of its ruins will rise the organized power of labour — the first truly human society, governed not by the greed of the few, but by the will and thought of the many.

Marx, Engels, and Lenin all taught that the emancipation of the working class is an international task. The struggle of the worker in one nation cannot be separated from that of workers in all others, for capitalism itself is a global system. Capital ignores borders; it moves freely across continents, exploiting labour wherever it finds it cheapest, weakest, or most divided. Therefore, the working class must also break all national boundaries in its organization and thought. Its victory depends on international unity — the solidarity of all who live by labour against the world system of capital that lives by exploitation.

Marx wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*: “Workers of all countries, unite! You have nothing to lose but your chains.” These words were not a slogan of sentiment but the concise statement of a scientific truth. The development of capitalism unites the fate of workers everywhere. The same forces that globalize production — trade, technology, communication — also create a global proletariat. From the factories of China to the warehouses of America, from the mines of Africa to the farms of Latin America, billions of workers are bound together by the same process of exploitation. The system that enslaves them is international; their liberation must be international as well.

Engels emphasized that the ruling class deliberately divides the working class to maintain power. Nationalism, racism, and religious prejudice are the weapons of the bourgeoisie. They teach the worker to hate his fellow worker abroad rather than his exploiter at home. The

capitalist class knows no nation when it invests, speculates, or wages war, yet it demands that the worker die for “his country.” Engels exposed this hypocrisy, showing that the bourgeoisie waves the flag only to protect its property. Internationalism, therefore, is not betrayal of one’s homeland, but loyalty to the true homeland of the worker — the community of all who labour.

Lenin developed this thought further in the epoch of imperialism. He showed that the world had become a single economic organism dominated by a few powerful states and their monopolies. The exploitation of workers in the imperial centre depended directly on the exploitation of the colonies and semi-colonies. Superprofits extracted from the periphery allowed the bourgeoisie to buy temporary peace at home, creating divisions within the working class. Lenin called this the “labour aristocracy” — a privileged stratum bribed by imperialism to support the system. To overcome such divisions, the workers of the imperialist countries must unite with the oppressed peoples of the world against their common enemy — the global bourgeoisie.

Today, this truth is more evident than ever. Capitalism has achieved the complete internationalization of production. A single commodity may involve workers from dozens of nations: minerals from Africa, assembly in Asia, design in Europe, and marketing in America. Every part of this chain depends on the exploitation of the rest. The wage of one worker is lowered by the poverty of another; the prosperity of one region rests on the degradation of another. Thus, the working class can triumph only by abolishing the system that divides it.

The United States, the imperial centre of the capitalist world, embodies these contradictions. The wealth of its bourgeoisie rests upon the labour of workers across the planet — from the hands that mine lithium for its technology to those who harvest crops and sew clothing for its markets. The American worker cannot achieve liberation while his brothers and sisters abroad remain enslaved by the same system that exploits him. His struggle at home must be linked to the struggles of the workers in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Europe. Only through global solidarity can the chains of imperialism be broken.

Lenin taught that international unity is not abstract sympathy but concrete organization. It requires coordination of workers’ movements across nations — the building of international parties, unions, and councils that act with a single strategy against global capital. Just as the bourgeoisie organizes its domination through international institutions — the IMF, the World Bank, NATO, and multinational corporations — so too must the proletariat organize its liberation through international cooperation and revolutionary solidarity. The International Workingmen’s Association of Marx’s time and the Third International founded by Lenin both embodied this principle: the unity of the world’s workers as a single revolutionary class.

But international unity also demands international consciousness. The worker must understand that his struggle is not isolated or national but part of the world-historical movement of labour against capital. This consciousness arises not through words alone but through shared experience. When workers see that their conditions — unemployment, low wages, debt, and insecurity — are reproduced across nations, they begin to recognize their

common enemy. Every strike, every protest, every act of defiance that inspires solidarity beyond borders contributes to the birth of this consciousness.

The bourgeoisie fears this unity above all else. It knows that when workers cease to believe in national divisions, its power will crumble. Hence the constant cultivation of chauvinism, the glorification of flags, and the demonization of “foreign threats.” Capitalist propaganda seeks to convince the worker that his enemy is abroad, while the real enemy stands beside him in the factory office or the corporate boardroom. Internationalism shatters this deception, revealing the truth that the only war worth fighting is the war of labour against capital.

Lenin warned that the workers’ movement could not succeed if confined within national limits. Each country’s revolution must aid and strengthen others, forming a chain that cannot be broken. “The victory of socialism in one country,” he said, “cannot be final as long as capitalism remains elsewhere.” The emancipation of humanity requires the collective struggle of all peoples. The international proletariat must act as a single organism, striking simultaneously against the global system of exploitation.

In the present world, where production, communication, and crisis are global, the call for international unity is not idealism — it is necessity. The working class is already international in its labour; it must become international in its thought and action. The machines that connect continents, the internet that links minds, the global chains of supply and consumption — all these can become instruments of solidarity when placed in the hands of the workers themselves.

Thus, the task before the proletariat is clear. It must transform its scattered struggles into a united front against the entire system of imperialist domination. The international unity of the working class is not merely a goal for the future — it is the condition of survival in the present. Only through this unity can the workers overthrow the decaying rule of capital, abolish the division of nations and classes, and build a world where humanity lives not by exploitation, but by cooperation.

The final words of Marx and Engels remain the eternal banner of the proletariat: “*Workers of all countries, unite!*” — not as a cry of desperation, but as the scientific declaration of history’s next stage, the conscious unity of labour rising against the death of capitalism and the birth of socialism.

The New Proletariat

The form of the working class changes with the development of capitalism, but its essence remains the same. Marx and Engels showed that the proletariat is not defined by the kind of work it performs, but by its relation to the means of production — by the fact that it owns nothing but its labour power, which it must sell in order to live. Whether in factory or office, on assembly line or digital platform, the worker remains a wage-labourer, exploited by capital. In our time, this truth appears in new and more complex forms: the industrial worker has not disappeared but has been joined — and in some cases replaced — by the service

worker, the gig worker, and the debt-slave. Together they form the *new proletariat* of global capitalism.

The industrial worker, the classical figure of Marx's time, remains the foundation of production. In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, billions still labour in factories producing the world's goods. Yet in the imperial centres, industry has been displaced or transformed. The old mills and plants have closed, replaced by service industries, logistics hubs, call centres, and digital networks. The same capitalist relations persist under a new mask: the wage system remains, the extraction of surplus value remains, but the worker's exploitation is now mediated through technology and finance.

The service worker embodies this transformation. In the advanced capitalist countries, the majority of workers now serve rather than produce material goods. They work in hospitals, retail, restaurants, offices, warehouses, and communication systems — in what appears to be “immaterial” labour. But this labour is no less productive of surplus value. The service worker creates profit by maintaining the circulation of capital — by selling, transporting, managing, and reproducing the conditions of production and consumption. Though often told he is “free” and “flexible,” his dependence on wages and his lack of ownership make him as proletarian as the industrial worker before him.

The **gig worker** represents a still newer form of exploitation. Platforms like Uber, Amazon, and DoorDash present themselves as “innovations” freeing individuals from traditional employment. In truth, they have revived the oldest and harshest forms of capitalist dependence. The gig worker owns his tools — a car, a phone, or a computer — but not his work. He bears all the risks of production, receives no benefits, and is paid only for fragments of time. Capital controls him through algorithms instead of foremen, through ratings instead of overseers. This is the digital extension of wage slavery, where exploitation is disguised as entrepreneurship.

The **debt-slave** is the logical outcome of this development. Under finance capitalism, the worker's subjugation extends beyond the workplace into every sphere of life. To survive, he must borrow — for housing, education, health, and even consumption. Wages no longer suffice to meet the cost of existence; debt fills the gap, binding the worker to the banks as surely as chains bound the serf to the land. The worker repays endlessly yet never escapes, for interest regenerates faster than wages rise. In this way, the financial system transforms life itself into collateral. The worker is exploited not only at work but in sleep, in sickness, and in old age.

Lenin foresaw this transformation when he described the parasitic character of imperialism. He wrote that the decay of capitalism produces new forms of subjugation, not less severe but more subtle. The worker is no longer openly oppressed by a single employer but by an entire network of financial and technological systems. The capitalist becomes invisible, existing as an algorithm, a corporate logo, a bank account. Exploitation becomes automated, embedded in daily routines, and justified by ideology.

The *new proletariat* lives in this invisible factory — the world factory of the twenty-first century. The machines are computers, logistics chains, and networks of data; the raw material is human attention, emotion, and time. The product is value for capital, extracted from every act of labour, consumption, and communication. The boundary between work and life disappears; every moment becomes a potential source of profit. The worker's exhaustion is total, because exploitation follows him everywhere — in his phone, his home, his thoughts.

Yet within this new form of oppression lies also a new potential for liberation. The global integration of production has created a working class more numerous and connected than ever before. The service worker in New York, the driver in São Paulo, the coder in Bangalore, and the factory worker in Shenzhen all participate in the same system of production. They share not only exploitation but interdependence. Capital has united them economically; their task is to unite politically.

The new proletariat is also more educated, more networked, and more aware of its power. Technology, used by capital to control, can become a tool of organization. The same platforms that monitor workers can be turned into instruments of coordination. The same networks that spread consumer ideology can transmit revolutionary thought. Just as the printing press once served both capital and revolution, so too can digital technology serve the awakening of class consciousness.

But for this to happen, the new proletariat must recognize itself as a class. It must understand that beneath the diversity of occupations and identities lies a common relation to capital. The teacher, the nurse, the warehouse worker, and the delivery driver are not separate groups but members of the same class, bound by the same dependence and capable of the same solidarity. When this awareness emerges, the divisions of race, nationality, and profession dissolve, and the working class appears again as what it has always been — the collective producer of all social wealth.

Engels foresaw that as capitalism develops, the proletariat becomes the overwhelming majority of society. Today that prophecy is fulfilled. The owners of capital form a tiny fraction of humanity, while billions live by selling their labour. This majority, once awakened to its unity and power, holds in its hands the fate of civilization. The contradictions of capitalism have already created the material basis for socialism; what remains is the conscious organization of the class that will build it.

Thus, the new proletariat — fragmented by design, but united by necessity — is the bearer of the next transformation of history. Its struggle will not only abolish the old forms of exploitation but the new ones: digital serfdom, financial enslavement, and ideological manipulation. From the ruins of the debt economy and the gig empire will rise the organized worker, conscious of his strength and purpose.

The form of the proletariat changes, but its mission remains eternal: to end the rule of capital, to make labour free, and to build a society where production serves life. The industrial worker of the nineteenth century began this task; the service worker, gig worker, and debt-

slave of today will complete it. The world they inherit is broken, but through their united struggle it can be remade — not for profit, but for humanity.

Marx, Engels, and Lenin each taught that revolution does not arise from poverty alone, but from contradiction — from the collision between the growing productive forces of society and the decaying social relations that restrain them. In the United States today, this contradiction has reached its sharpest form. The country that once stood as the citadel of capitalism now embodies its crisis. Beneath the appearance of wealth, stability, and power lies a society divided, stagnant, and increasingly aware of its own decline. These conditions — economic, social, and spiritual — contain immense revolutionary potential.

Marx explained that the development of the productive forces under capitalism creates not only wealth but the class that will destroy it: the proletariat. In the United States, this process has produced a working class more numerous, educated, and interconnected than at any point in history. The vast majority of Americans — from service workers and warehouse labourers to nurses, teachers, technicians, and delivery drivers — now live by selling their labour power. They are the creators of all social wealth, yet they control neither its production nor its distribution. The middle strata, once the buffer of the system, are collapsing into proletarian conditions: burdened by debt, rising costs, and the insecurity of wage dependence.

The ideological façade of the “American Dream” — the promise that individual effort leads to prosperity — is breaking down. Millions of workers now see that their labour enriches others while their own lives grow more precarious. Home ownership declines, healthcare and education become unaffordable, and wages stagnate while prices rise. The myth of social mobility has given way to the reality of permanent inequality. This disillusionment, though painful, marks the first step toward class consciousness. The worker begins to recognize that his struggle is not individual but collective, that his suffering is not accidental but systemic.

Engels wrote that revolution becomes possible when “the forces of production have outgrown the existing order.” This describes the United States precisely. Its technology, science, and labour productivity could ensure abundance for all. Yet these forces are constrained by private ownership and the pursuit of profit. The result is unemployment amid capacity, homelessness amid empty homes, hunger amid surplus food. The contradiction between potential and reality is intolerable. Every social problem — from inequality to ecological collapse — testifies that the capitalist form of organization has become a fetter on human progress.

Lenin observed that revolutionary potential grows when the ruling class can no longer govern as before, and the oppressed can no longer live as before. The U.S. ruling class faces both crises at once. It governs through political decay and ideological confusion. The two major parties, though presenting themselves as opposites, represent the same capitalist interests. Their conflicts are theatrical, their unity fundamental. Millions see through this false dualism and withdraw from the system altogether, creating a vacuum of legitimacy. The bourgeois state, increasingly dependent on police, surveillance, and propaganda, reveals its fear of the very population it claims to represent.

Meanwhile, the working class, though fragmented, begins to stir. Strikes multiply across sectors long thought pacified — logistics, education, healthcare, technology. Workers demand not only better wages but dignity, control, and voice. The rise of independent unions and movements outside traditional bureaucratic leadership indicates a new stage of awakening. These struggles, though still dispersed, express a growing recognition that the problem is not this or that employer, but the system itself.

The United States is also witnessing the emergence of a *new proletarian consciousness* that transcends old divisions. The ruling class has long maintained power by dividing workers along racial, ethnic, and cultural lines. But shared precarity is dissolving these barriers. The same capitalist forces that exploit migrant labour exploit native-born workers; the same debt that enslaves the student chains the factory hand. The recognition of common struggle, born from shared misery, becomes the seed of solidarity.

The younger generations, raised amid crisis and disillusionment, show a growing rejection of capitalism itself. Polls reveal rising sympathy for socialism, not as an abstract idea but as a practical necessity. These youth, educated yet excluded from stability, represent the intellectual and moral vanguard of a coming transformation. Their anger, if united with the organized power of the working class, can form a revolutionary alliance of thought and labour. Lenin would call this the merging of socialist consciousness with the mass movement — the essential precondition for revolution.

The military, police, and political apparatus of the U.S. state remain powerful, but they cannot halt the contradictions that eat away at its foundations. Economic crisis, inflation, and imperial overextension weaken the material base of bourgeois power. The ruling class can still repress, but it can no longer inspire; it can still command, but it can no longer convince. Its legitimacy erodes daily as inequality reaches grotesque extremes. A government that spends trillions on war while its people struggle for food and shelter cannot endure indefinitely.

Lenin taught that revolution requires not only objective conditions — crisis, decay, mass discontent — but also subjective ones: organization, leadership, and the will to act. The revolutionary potential of the modern U.S. working class lies not yet in full consciousness, but in its situation. The contradictions of life under capitalism will continue to sharpen this consciousness. Every strike, every protest, every mutual aid network and collective act of resistance contributes to the formation of a new movement that challenges the entire order of property and power.

The United States, long the heart of global capitalism, will also be the site of its most profound reckoning. Its immense productive capacity, its technological sophistication, and its diverse working class provide the very materials for socialist transformation. When its workers recognize their unity and power — when they cease to compete and begin to organize — the strongest bastion of capitalism will become the forge of its overthrow.

The revolutionary potential within modern U.S. class conditions is not hypothetical; it is historical necessity. The contradictions of capitalism cannot remain unresolved. Either they

will lead to reaction, repression, and decline, or they will burst forth in revolutionary reorganization. The choice lies in the consciousness and unity of the working class. The soil is prepared, the crisis is ripe — what remains is the act of will, the decision of the producers to seize the world they already sustain.

When that moment comes, the prophecy of Marx and Lenin will find its realization even in the centre of imperial power: that the grave of capitalism will be dug by its own workers, and from the ruins of exploitation will rise the first truly human society — the socialist commonwealth of labour, equality, and freedom.

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